

# **Sesquicentennial History of North Liberty, Iowa**

## **Introduction**

This history of North Liberty and Penn Township was created in the 150<sup>th</sup> year of Iowa statehood (1846-1996). It was made possible through the sponsorship of Hills Bank and Trust of North Liberty.

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This history was written by Joan Alt Belknap, compiled from information collected by Joe Alt and other sources. The original illustrations of North Liberty buildings were drawn by artist Tony Alt.

This history was originally written as a computer program which no longer exists. I have edited it so everyone can read it but I did not update the text and how things were in 1996. Keep in mind it was written to be accessible by school children, but interesting to adults as well.

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# Preface

This history does not contain everything there is to know about North Liberty and Penn Township.

There are many people and events about whom we know very little.

This does not mean they were not important.

It contains a lot about my family. That is because my Grandfather kept a diary for much of his life.

It is because my Grandmother kept a scrapbook for much of her life.

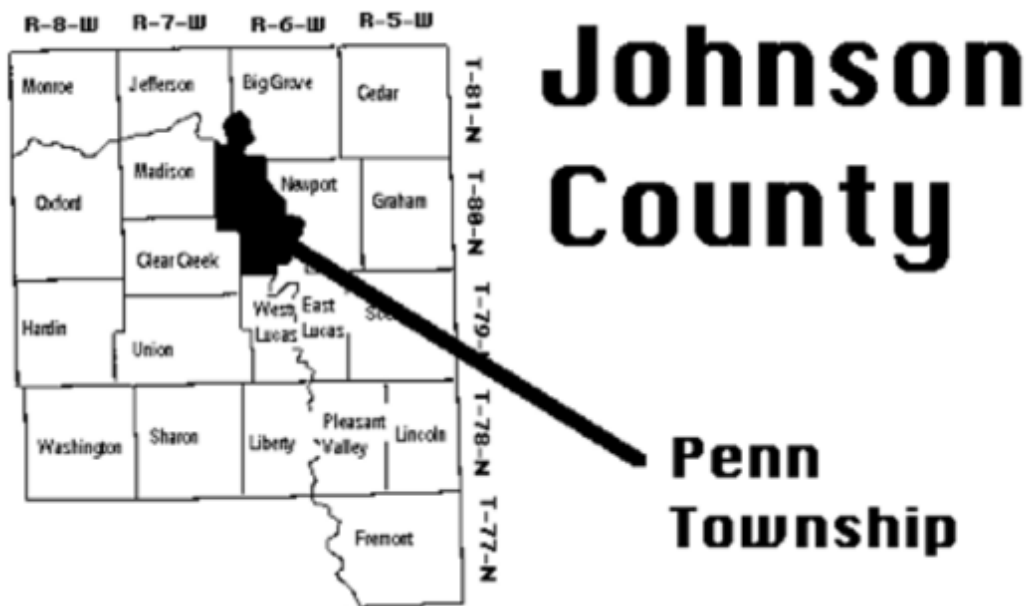
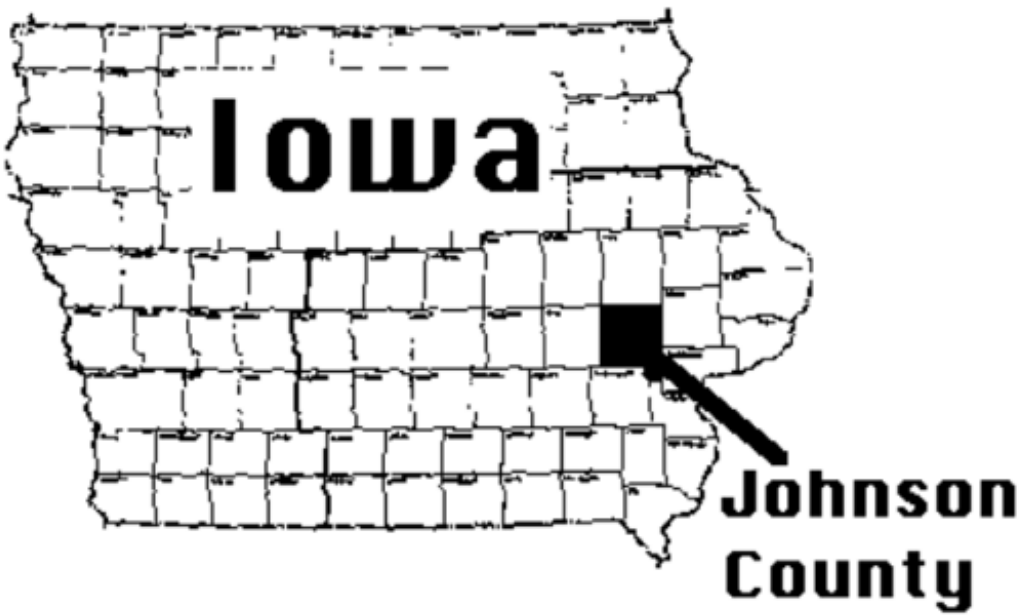
It is because my father spent many hours collecting local history and sharing it.

I have spent many hours reading the “story” left by my family and others who lived in the area.

I also used books, magazines, maps, official records, historical items, photographs, conversations with other people and newspapers.

Starting with the next page You will be able to read all sorts of information and see pictures of different things. I hope you find it interesting enough to read all of it sooner or later, because the history of North Liberty and Penn Township is like a puzzle. It is made up of many little bits of information, and each bit is important. Everything that occurred helped to make the town, the township and the people the way they are today. I hope you have fun and maybe learn a little too.

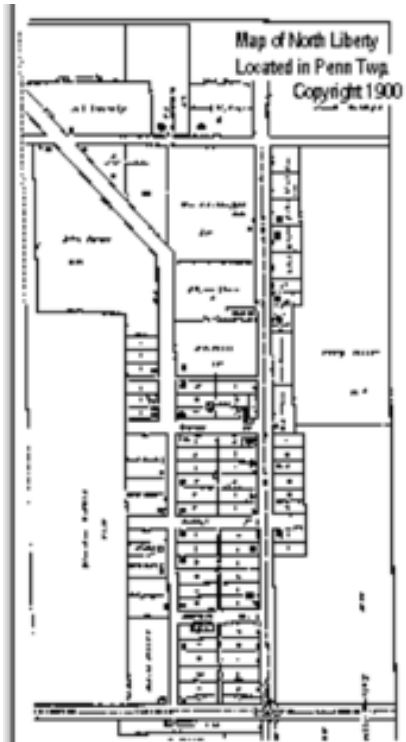
# Maps





# **Penn Township**

**North Liberty**



## **Map of North Liberty in Penn Township in Johnson County in Iowa**

# Johnson County Quick Facts

**Established on December 21, 1837, before Iowa became a state.**

**1998 population = 96,119  
1980 population = 81,717  
Population density = 156.4  
Land = 614.5 square miles  
Water = 8.9 square miles**

**The county was named for:**

**Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson  
(1788-1850).  
Officer in the War of 1812  
U.S. Senator from Kentucky  
(1819-1829)  
U.S. Vice-President  
(1837-1841)**

**The above information was taken from:  
American Places Dictionary v.3.  
Midwest. Detroit, MI : Omnigraphics, Inc., c1994. p317.**

**The county seat is Iowa City.**

**Located between 41 degree 24 minutes and 41 degrees 51 minutes North latitude. Central meridian is 91 degrees 33 minutes West longitude.**

**Only one county in Iowa is named for the rebellion of 1861 (Civil War). Lyon County is named for Nathaniel Lyon, killed at the Battle of Wilson's Creek on August 12, 1861.**

Iowa Historical Record. Iowa City : State Historical Society, c1888-1890. Volumes IV, V, VI. p. 33.

Sixty-six Iowa county names were chosen from three sources:

- Statesmen's names
- The American Revolution
- Names of Native Americans

The remaining 33 were taken from various other sources.

Only one county was named for the "Rebellion of 1861" more commonly known as the Civil War. That county is Lyon county which was named for General Nathaniel Lyon who was killed at the Battle of Wilson's Creek on August 12, 1861.

## Penn Township Quick Facts

The township was established on February 10, 1846.

It originally included Madison Township as well. Madison Township was split off in 1868 into a separate township.

Cemeteries are:  
Ridgewood  
Alt  
Hemphill  
Oak Hill  
Clark

The township was organized on a motion by Francis Bowman. It was named for William Penn. Many of the earliest settlers in the area came from Pennsylvania.

The first board of trustees was Stephen Maynard, Jacob H. Alt, and Alonzo Denison. The first clerk was John W. Alt and the first treasurer was John Wilson.

80th Township North  
West 1/2 of 6, North 1/2 of 7 range  
West.

The post office is North Liberty.

## North Liberty Quick Facts

Latitude=41-44-29 N  
Longitude=91-36-33 W:

1990 population = 2,926  
1980 population = 2,046  
1960 population = 364  
Population density = 609.6  
Land = 4.8 square miles  
Water = 0.0 square miles

Most of the above information was taken from:  
American Places Dictionary  
v.3. Midwest. Detroit, MI :  
Omnigraphics, Inc., c1994.  
p317.

John Gaylor, the first settler in the area which later became the town, came in 1838.

Town first platted in 1857

Town was named by 1st grade teacher Martha Bowman.

Original owners of land were Patrick and Anna Murphy and Francis and Margaret Bowman.

Most of town platted and laid out by Nicholas Zeller.

Incorporated on November 10, 1913.

First mayor was Julius Kohl.

# Some Businesses in the Area

**1882** -- (From History of Johnson County 1836-1882)

- Grocery store and boot and shoe shop kept by HA White, postmaster. H.A. White also owned a livery barn
- Saddle and harness shop by John Andrle. Mr. Anderle's 56th wedding anniversary write-up (1937) also notes that he operated a sawmill in Shueyville and later owned a creamery, and did custom threshing in North Liberty. He was an engineer, and in later life did pump and well work.
- Blacksmith by John Northup.
- Wagon shop by A. H. Statler.
- Sorghum mill and feed grinder--run by steam engine of 24 hp also running a saw mill, property of George and Andrle.
- Two churches, 2 schoolhouses.

**1900** -- (From 1900 Atlas of Johnson County Iowa)

- Sorghum Factories on the following properties:
  - Jacob George
  - Nathan Owens
  - Nancy Bane
- Dr. VonStein's office--he often traveled to see his patients by horse and buggy.
- Myers & Sons' Tin Shop
- H.A. White's Store
- Meyers & Price General Merchandise
- I counted 7 schools in Penn Township

**1917** -- (From 1917 Atlas of Johnson County Iowa) -- population 200

- I counted 6 schools in Penn Township (could not see the "Hemphill" School)
- Mayor -- Julius Kohl
- Council Members -- John Marek, J.G. Wray, Ray Lininger, C.E. Maxey, Bert Eastland.
- Clerk -- Earl Myers
- Treasurer -- Isaac Myers
- Assessor -- Jess Green

- Farmer's Savings Bank -- M. Young president, Sam Ranshaw vice-president, J.F. Cippera cashier.
- North Liberty Lumber Yard -- "Brick, Tile, Coal and Cement"
- Kohl's Garage -- "Kissel Kars and Trucks, Farm Machinery, Real Estate and Loans"
- North Liberty Savings Bank -- "Capital \$10,000, Surplus \$15,000, A.L. Moreland president, Jacob George vice-president, S.E. Lehnert cashier."
- A.S. Albright & Sons -- "General Hardware, Farm Machinery, Wagons, Buggies, Ford Cars, Gasoline Engines."

**1919** -- (From 1919 How to Do Things by Farm Journal Magazine) --

- Albright & Sons -- Hardware and Implements "General Hardware, Farm Machinery, Wagons, Buggies, International Trucks and Gasoline Engines" (this was located to the southwest of the school)
- Denison, Dave -- House Mover
- Farmer's Savings Bank -- Banking
- Hardy, Q.L. -- Garage
- Herring, Arthur -- Swine Breeder "Duroc, Jersey Swine, Pathfinder and Orion, Cherry King strains of breedings. Registered Stock at all times. All hogs guaranteed breeders. Tel. and Address North Liberty, Iowa. 3 1/2 Miles Northwest of North Liberty."
- Kohl, Julius -- Real Estate "Farms in Johnson, Linn and Northern Iowa Counties. Farmland in Minnesota, North and S. Dakota AT ALL TIMES."
- Lentz, L. L. -- White Rock Chickens
- Marak Bros. -- Farm Tractors and General Store
- North Liberty Lumber Yard -- Building material, Brick, Tile, Coal and Cement
- Blacksmith across from school (according to Joe Alt) later replaced by the building which housed the previous fire station.

**Undated** but probably early 1950's -- The following were advertisers in an elementary school "annual".

- North Liberty Elevator -- "Grain, Feed"
- Parks Complete Automotive Services -- "Wrecker Service 24 hour, Day Phone 311, Night Phone 1615"
- Zell Anderson -- "General Electric Appliances, Phone 154"
- Northwestern Mutual Insurance Ass'n -- "Mrs. Mabel Z. Stoner, Secretary, Fire, Wind, Automobile, Phone 2511."



- Bud & Walt's Garage -- "Get the Best at Bud & Walt's Garage, Highway No. 218, Phone 271." I best remember getting our Sunday newspaper at Bud and Walt's. I also remember Opal Pirkel who worked there. He was tall and lanky, and usually wore a hat that was "beanie" like, with no bill on it. I believe the owners were Bud Pirkel and Walt Anciaux.
- LeGrand Grocery -- "Groceries, Fresh Fruits and Meats."

**Jan 1968** -- Coralville Bank & Trust branch opened at Kosers

**Undated** -- The following are businesses that are known to have existed, but little information has been found on them, including the dates they were in business.

- Ramsey Sausage Maker--In his 1949 obituary, it was stated that Harry R. Ramsey operated a grocery store and market in North Liberty but had been retired since 1920. Irving Weber's "What's Your History IQ" (Iowa City Press Citizen 10/8/75) claims that Iowa City stores advertised "North Liberty Sausage Today" which came from Harry Ramsey's Pork Packing Operation. The shop was located on Stewart Street. The shop is gone but the house was the same that Jim and Hazel Hudson lived in for many years.
- Blacksmith Shop -- mentioned by Joe Alt, was located across from the school.
- Shannon's Beer Garden -- existed in the 1950's and early 1960's. Currently is Rookie's Sports Bar.
- The Lighthouse Supper Club -- existed in the 1950's and early 1960's. Currently is a residence next to the post office.
- LeGrand's Grocery Store -- existed in the 1950's. Currently is a residence next to the Cherry Street Laundromat. When we were kids, we used to sneak over there before and after school to buy candy bars. "Pop" LeGrand had an old fashioned glass case that the candy was in. He and Mrs. LeGrand lived in the back of the store.
- Stahle's General Store -- I believe it was the same location as LeGrand's.
- David Saylor VonStein -- (died in 1946 at the age of 92) was a carpenter according to his obituary.

## Other Names of North Liberty

North Liberty was officially named by Martha J. Bowman, daughter of Frances Bowman and a teacher in the area. Her father was one of the original owners of the land on which North Liberty eventually grew. This occurred in 1857 when the town was platted.

Before that, the area was known by several other names. One of the most unusual was **Squash Bend**. The story goes that a doctor Josiah Crawford moved to the area around 1842 (Irving Weber gets credit for finding the date and the first two explanations). I have read three explanations for the name: 1) because of the abundance of squash grown in the area 2) because he was a botanical doctor and existed on a diet of squash and pumpkin and 3) that when he moved here he was short of cash and his family had to live off squash and other things he could grow for months. (Press Citizen article) What do YOU think??

Other names were **North Bend** and **Big Bend**. These came from the fact that an area of northern Penn Township is largely surrounded by the bend that the Iowa River makes before it turns and goes southward.

The last name that I have come across is **Scales Bend**. The road which goes out to the campground, past the Ridgewood Cemetery is called Scales Bend Road. It was named for Nathaniel Scales.

## Nathaniel Scales/Scales Bend Road

In 1840, Joseph Dennison took a Sunday walk toward the river and discovered a neighbor he didn't know was there. Nathaniel Scales had traveled by horseback from Kentucky. After reaching Iowa City in 1839, he found work at the Lingle Mill near Solon. When he decided to settle in the rich area across the river, he didn't know there were other settlers just a few miles away at North Liberty. Since his was the first clearing in the area where the river made a big bend, it came to be known as Scales Bend. Today we know the area as the Jolly Roger Campground and the road leading toward it is called Scales Bend Road.

At the suggestion of his new friend, Nathaniel eventually settled near Oakdale on land that did not have to be painfully cleared of trees like his first choice. Eventually he accumulated over 500 acres (some cost only 50 to 75 cents an acre. In 1844 he paid a tax of \$2 for property worth the whopping sum of \$349.

He married Nancy Crozier in 1842, and theirs was the first marriage in Penn Township. His place came to be known as Hazelwood Farm. He raised horses, (often having 40 to 50 mares at a time) and even had a small race track.

Unable to stand the rough prairie life, his wife died at the age of 21 in 1846. She is buried in the Alt Cemetery along with a son (S. Franklin 19 years, 9 months and 13 days, died on Nov. 9, 1864) and daughter (Magda A. 21 years, 1 month and 9 days, died on Sep 4, 1864). Nathaniel married another Nancy, Nancy Epperson. Their son was Nathaniel W. and his son Alfred W. was the last Scales relative in the county. Around 1900, the land was purchased by the Iowa legislature for a sanitarium for tuberculosis patients. There is a long article about the Scales family in the Iowa City Press Citizen, July 1, 1939.

# Settlers Who Came From Pennsylvania to Penn Township

**Date, name, and county or city in Pennsylvania they lived in at some time...**

1839 - Alt family (York)  
1840 - David Crozier (Fayette)  
1841 - James Chamberlin (Adams)  
1842 - Alexander L. Moreland (Franklin)  
1842 - Orville Babcock (Erie)  
1845 - John L. Moreland (Franklin)  
1845 - Valentine Meyers (Cumberland)  
1846 - Nicholas Zeller Sr. (Cumberland)  
1846 - John Kepford (Cumberland)  
1846 - Martin George (Cumberland)  
1846 - Jacob Bowman (Cumberland)  
1847 - Jonathan Hawk (Lancaster)  
1848 - Abraham Meyers (Lancaster)  
1848 - Michael Snavely (Dauphin & Cumberland)  
1849 - Jacob Zeller (Cumberland)  
1849 - Nicholas Zeller Jr. (Franklin)  
1849 - Jacob Lininger (Cumberland)  
1849 - John Meyers (York)  
1849 - Mathias Albright (York)  
1850 - Peter VonStein (Chambersburg)  
1851 - Michael Zeller (Cumberland)  
1852 - James Bridenstine (Huntington)  
1853 - George Anderson (Bedford)  
1853 - John Anderson (Bedford)  
1856 - Samuel Alloway (Huntington)  
1859 - Isaac Meyers (York)  
1860 - David Stewart (Huntington)  
1866 - Robert Stewart (Huntington)  
1866 - Jacob F. Price (Bedford)  
1874 - Samuel Meyers (York)  
1875 - Harry A. White (Bedford)  
1881 - David Ziegler (Cumberland)

## Chronology of Some Events in North Liberty History

- 1838 - John Gaylor was first white settler in the area
- 1839 - J.B. and A.C. Denison arrived and broke the first furrow on land in section 12, later owned by Isaac Myers.
- 1840 - The following families had arrived: David and Carson Wray, George Wein, Jacob H., Joseph A., and John W. Alt, Joseph I. Clark, Martin Harless, Robert Waterson, John Aslan, Gilbert and Frank Herrington, and James Chamberlin.
- 1841 - Methodist class organized (Alts, Weins, Wrays, Denisons) 8 members
- 1843 - Log school house was constructed
- 1846 - Penn Post Office was organized at North Liberty on Feb 10
- 1849 - or 1850 what later became Ridgewood Cemetery was started by James Chamberlin, JB Dennison, Elder Snavelly, Elder Jacob Lininger and others.
- 1857 - North Liberty platted
- 1860 - First frame school house built
- 1865 - Martin George sold lots 5-9 to Robert Stewart for \$600 (later became site of city offices)
- 1865 - Nathan Owens was Justice of the Peace-he signed the deed mentioned above
- 1865 - The IRS issued a physician license to David Stewart
- 1868 - Lutheran Church built (Bowmans, VonSteins, Zellers & others)
- 1877 - S. B. Myers was drawn into the saw by a slab and had his leg amputated by Dr. Stewart & Dr. Young. The saw mill belonged to Chamberlin, Myers, Moreland.
- 1883 - There were 7 schools and 4 churches in the area
- 1895 - First frame Methodist Church built
- 1899 - New 2 story, 3 room school house built (burned in 1971)
- 1903 - Telephone system installed

- 1904 - Interurban began passenger service
- 1905 - Electricity to North Liberty
- 1908 - North Liberty street lights were installed
- 1913 - North Liberty incorporated (Julius Kohl first mayor)
- 1926 - Road from Iowa City to Cedar Rapids was paved
- 1936 - Worst winter in memory for most residents
- 1949 - Arthur Alt was hit by a car, PTA and Community Improvement Assoc. petition for signs to be erected on the highway
- 1953 - Interurban ceased operation
- 1959 - Last classes in old school building
- 1960 - Population was 364
- 1960 - New Penn Elementary school finished
- 1967 - Population was 783 (special census taken)
- 1967 - Dial phones installed by South Slope Telephone Inc.
- 1967 - Sewage Treatment plant opened
- 1969 - New Post Office finished (1968?)
- 1971 - Old school house burned (1974?)
- 1972 - Joe & Agda Alt sold Stewart home to city for site of the city hall and fire station
- 1973 - Stewart home removed by controlled burn
- 1973 - North Liberty Fire Department started with their own equipment
- 1975 - Fire station and city hall built
- 1977 - City water system completed
- 1984 - Penn Meadows Park dedicated July 22nd
- 1985 - Additions made to city offices and library opened
- 1990 - Population was 2,926
- 1994 - North Liberty's 5th well drilled
- 1994 - Council votes for a new water tower
- 1994 - Ground broken for Grace Community Church
- 1994 - Population was 3,666

# North Liberty Early History

It is recorded in the pages of history that John Gaylor and his family were the first to come to the North Liberty area, arriving in the summer of 1838. He made a claim to land in what later became Section 7 in Penn Township.

Mr. Gaylor sold his claim to John Wilson and then moved back to Illinois. According to the description, this claim laid East of Front Street. Penn Meadows Park and the Methodist Church are on a part of this land.

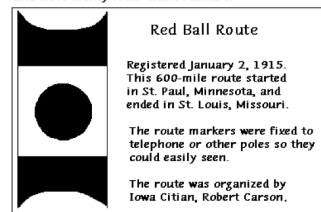
Nineteen years after Gaylor made the first claim for land, North Liberty was platted in 1857. The original town was only one block wide. It was bounded on the east by Front Street, on the west by Main Street, on the south by Zeller Street, and on the north by Penn Street. The land was originally owned by Francis and Margaret Bowman and Patrick and Ann Murphy. The Bowman's daughter Martha, who was a school teacher, chose the name for the town.

The map used in this stack for the guide to Historical Locations was taken from an atlas published in 1900. It is interesting to note the land west of Main Street was farm land owned by Nicholas Zeller. It was developed after 1900, about the time the interurban was put into service in 1904. It is generally agreed upon that more than any other early factor, the passenger rail service contributed most to the early growth of the town.

Notice there is no Dubuque Street. This street was established when the road was paved from Iowa City to Cedar Rapids in 1926. Before Dubuque Street was created to provide a direct route through town, the old road came into town from the south, turned west on Zeller, north on Front, west on Cherry, north on Main and then out of town on what was known as the angling road.

When automobiles became more plentiful, a Red Ball Route was established between St. Louis and St. Paul (the first Avenue of the Saints). The route was marked by red balls painted on white background, on telephone poles or fence posts etc. The route passed through North Liberty from the south and at first was plain dirt. It turned off the angling road at Zeller Street, went west to Front Street and then north out of town on the other end of the angling road. Some of the houses marked on the map are still standing. You can read about some of them on the Historical Locations page.

Marked highways in the state brought better road conditions and more money from tourist dollars.



From Irving Weber's Iowa City, vol. 5

## Penn Township History

Penn Township was first settled by John Gaylor in 1838. He made the first claim in what later became Section 7. He sold the claim to John Wilson and returned to Illinois. On September 11, 1854, Wilson sold a piece of this land to the trustees of the Methodist Church. Today Penn Meadows Park and the present Methodist Church stand on this land.

Next in 1838 came Alonzo C. Denison. He staked a claim and then returned for his family. He returned with his family and his brothers Joseph and George. Alonzo was the first Sunday School Superintendent of the Methodist Class Meeting. Alonzo's month old daughter, Louisa died on November 15, 1842 and was the first person buried in the Wein/Alt cemetery. On August 13, 1846 his wife Maria died at the age of 21, followed several weeks later on September 1st by his 2 month old daughter Matilda. On May 24, 1849, his 5 year old daughter Maria died. Alonzo later moved to Kansas where he died in 1900.

George S. Denison took a claim in Clear Creek Township. He was born in 1817 and died in 1883, and buried in Ridgewood Cemetery.

Joseph B. Denison was born December 1, 1815 in Muskingdon County, Ohio. His parents Gerdon and Etherlinda were natives of Massachusetts. They moved to Ohio where J.B. was born and raised on a farm. At age 23, he left Ohio and went to Illinois to join his two brothers, coming further to Iowa in 1839. He took a claim in what is now Section 1, about a mile northwest of the present North Liberty. He had a yoke of oxen with which he broke the prairie land. He broke not only his own prairie land, but that of many others in the area who didn't have a "breaking plow." In 1853, he married Elizabeth Diggins, a native of Pennsylvania. They had 5 children. Two of the four who survived were Mariah 1854-1929, and Julia 1857-1932. Julia married Harlan C. Sentman. One of their children was Davis Sentman who was the grandfather of Stephanie Rourke of Hills Bank and Trust in North Liberty.

They were followed in 1840 by George Wein, John W., Jacob, Joseph A., and Adam Alt, and David Crozier. James Chamberlin and Carson B. and David Wray came the same year and settled in the area which is now Madison Township.

In 1846 the two townships were one. The first board of trustees was composed of Stephen Maynard, Jacob H. Alt, and Alonzo Dennison. The first clerk was John W. Alt,



the first treasurer was John Wilson. The first assessor was elected in 1854. Prior to this the assessing was done by the clerk.

Penn Township was organized on a motion by Francis Bowman. It was named Penn Township in honor of William Penn. On October 15, 1860, Madison Township was formed, splitting off part of the area which was formerly Penn.

The township trustees had considerable power. They hired a boss to maintain the roads. All male voters were subject to paying a poll tax. They had the option of paying the tax in money or working on the road with a team of horses. In my grandfather Rollie's diary, he often mentions how many teams worked on the road on a given day. The horses were used on the horse drawn grader or a slip to move dirt. All work was done under the township road boss. People were also hired to drag a certain section of road. The drag was made of iron, pulled by four horses. Later, larger graders were used and a tractor pulled it. At the present, the county does all road maintenance with modern equipment.

The township trustees had charge of all elections. Votes were counted one at a time after the polls were closed. Sometimes it would take well into the night to get the job done. The results were then taken in to the county courthouse in Iowa City. In later years a counting board was permitted to count votes before the polls closed.

Another duty of the trustees was to act as fence viewers in a dispute over a fence line. They had to listen to both sides of an argument and decide which side was correct.

Today, the main duty of the trustees is to maintain vigil over the cemeteries. At one time a sexton was paid 25 cents per hour for pushing a hand reel mower to cut the grass. \$10 was paid for digging a grave. Today he trustees levy tax money for fire protection and cemetery upkeep for the townships two cemeteries.

## Penn and North Liberty Firsts

First **marriage** Nathaniel Scales and Nancy Crozier on August 30, 1842, officiated by Judge Fernando H. Lee

First **teacher**-Benjamin Horner

First **school** in 1842 in the Crozier cabin.

First **frame school** house in 1860.

First **death**, child of Martin Harless (buried on the claim)

First **physician** - William Crawford.

First **settler in the big bend** of the river, Nathaniel Scales.

First **board of trustees**-A. C. Dennison, Jacob H. Alt, and Stephen Maynard.

First **clerk** of the township- John W. Alt

First **treasurer**-John Wilson

First **boy to come** to the township, son of Alonzo Denison.

First **girl born** in the area, daughter of John Gaylor.

First **sermon** in Wilson's Grove by Rev. Lineback a Methodist preacher. (the site of Wilson's Grove is under some question as one source noted it was where Samuel Green later lived in sec 7 but the maps show that Samuel Green lived south of town. Other sources say that Wilson's Grove was Northeast of town in section 6). Most sources do agree that it was in Wilson's Grove. I tend to believe that it was Northeast of town in section 7 because on the 1870 map of Penn Township, John Wilson owned land to the Northeast of town. This land is currently owned by Wendyll Stoner and Dick Meade lives there. It is at the northeast corner of Penn Meadows Park. **Late breaking news...** In a conversation with Mr. Dean Coglean about something else, I learned this: "The second house north of the Methodist Church originally belonged to **John Wilson** in 1843. In 1874, it was purchased by **Sam Green**." So that solves the problem. Since there is a large grove of old trees at the northeast corner of Penn

Meadows Park, I think it was Wilson's Grove, and Sam Green did later own part of that land.

First **grinding** was brought in by JB and George Denison who stopped in Davenport to have a load of wheat from Illinois ground. When told it would take a month, they bought 100 pounds of flour and went back for the rest later. Later a mill was opened at West Liberty (Wapsienonok)

First child buried in Wein/Alt cemetery was child of Carson B Wray.

First **burial in Ridgewood Cemetery** was Mary, daughter of J. Lininger in 1850.

Dr. Orrin built first house in North Liberty & kept first post office.

First **city administrator** was Patrick McGarvey in 1990.

First **housing for the elderly** was finished, called Foursquare Apartments in 1978.

In 1953, North Liberty purchased its first **speed analyzer** to catch speeding cars. It was operated by town marshall Charles H. Keefer.

in 1976, the first **American Legion post** in North Liberty received its charter. It was named Bicentennial Post 1976 and the first Post Commander was John Hartnett who served in the Air Force in Korea.

First snow to fall in September on 9/26/1942.

Rev. Tenant organized a **boy scout troupe** about 1940-1941 which I think was the first.

## People Married a Long Time

Some time ago it seemed to my Dad that there were an awful lot of people who had been married for a long, long time. He started to dig through old clippings and records and came up with this list of some of them.

### Long marriages

50 years or more = 54 + 11 + 3

60 years or more = 11 + 3

70 year or more = 3

When you see two dates, it means they were married in the first year, and in the second year listed, their anniversary occurred or one of them died.

If you see only one date, it means they were still married and alive at the time it was researched.

If you don't see any dates, it means that my father knew they had observed a 50th anniversary but didn't have any details.

I'm sure that there are more that could be added to the list. In the original list, my father also told how many years they had been married. I think it would be more fun for you to figure that out for yourselves so I have not included it.

Joseph Abner and Elizabeth Kepford Alt 1848-1904

George and Dora Colony Alt 1882-1935

Rollie Harlan and Emma Stewart Alt 1889-1949

Joseph Abner and Agda Eldeen Alt 1936-1995

Dr. David and Winifred Duff Stewart 1855-1910

Robert and Annie McDonald Stewart (54 years)

Ira and Ella Bane Chamberlin 1879-1949

George G. and Emma Stoner Ranshaw 1893-1944

David and Josephine Roberts VonStein 1885-1946

Isaac and Sarah Moreland Myers 1868-1920

Valentine and Mary Stoner Myers 1851-1911

Mahlon K. and Mary Babcock Wolfe 1872-1922

Alex and Mary Zeller Moreland 1868-1918

Abraham and Elizabeth Kronmiller Albright 1862-1912  
Harry and Elizabeth Alloway White 1868-1924  
Wendyll and Lois Means Stoner 1930-  
White and Vera Larew 1925-1987  
W. W and Cora Moreland Young 1897-1953  
R. I. and Mabel Myers Snavely 1907-1966  
Lester and Emily Winborn Means 1908-1971  
Clifford and Inez Snavely Koser 1929-1989  
Lee and Edith Wray Ranshaw 1918-1974  
Ford and Eleanor Brown Work 1920-1979  
Orville and Florence Moreland Wolfe 1897-1955  
M. M. and Mae Stoner Wolfe 1900-1954  
Arthur and Nevada Orris (50 years)  
Lewis and Iowa Myers Lentz 1901-1960  
John and Catherine Zak Andrlle 1881-1931  
Jesse C. and Nellie Moreland Fuhrmeister 1913-1980  
S. R. and Frankie Denter Lininger 1890-1943  
William and Blanche Finch Bealer 1914-1967  
Mr. and Mrs. George Zahradnek 1897-1947  
Leonard and Erma Madsen Sentman 1935-1985  
Emil and Gertie Novy 1927-1996  
Ervin and Ruth Lininger 1937-1989  
Homer and Beulah Riggle 1933-1996  
Thomas and Minnie Cogan 1891-1950  
Albert and Nellie Rinehart 1906-1957  
Alton and Mary Ranshaw Zeller 1914-1967  
C.B. and Lola Potter Wolfe 1898-1948  
Fred and Delma Dale Anderson Dever 1934-  
Dale and Jessie White Anderson 1906-1965  
Bert and Effie Lininger Myers 1909-1960  
Isaac B. and Ivy Anderson Meyers 1899-1973  
James and Nancy Stewart Bane 1869-1918  
Jacob and Martha Zeller George 1877-1934  
Howard and Oda Ramsey Anderson 1910-1975  
Logan and Bess Cress Myers 1915-1985 (see story below)  
Henry and Myrtle Ramsey Wray 1900-1964  
Glenn and Lola Gringer Simpson 1926-1980  
Frank and Elma Austin Colony 1927-1980  
Dr. S. A. and Edna Zeller Neumann 1927-1977  
Clarence and Marie Amish Brant 1927-1986

Ray and Geneva Crozier Lininger 1911-1955  
Alex and Sarah Hastings Young 1919-1977  
Bert and Francis Conley Martin 1916-1967  
Edward and Kathryn Myers Thomas 1939-1989  
Glenn and Mary Rinehart Herring 1942-1992  
Theodore and Mearl Brogan Crippen 1925-1975  
Lisle and Agnes Wright Hurlbut 1926-1990  
Zell and Margaret Ferguson Anderson 1941-1991  
Joe and Esther Klenk Hemphill 1940-  
Roll M. and Ida Lininger Work 1895-1952  
Donald and Esther Novak Bowman 1939-  
Earl and Rosalia Green Flory 1938-1991  
Leo and Beatrice Heddleston Tesar 1916-1966  
Lester and Elsie Herring Martin 1939-  
Carl and Eloise Martin Snavely 1942-1992  
David and Ethel Bowman Green 1942-  
Paul and Ruth Andrew Colony 1936-1990

Mr. Dean Cogan told me that the older house near the corner of Penn and Front Streets (now owned by Ronald Gaule) was originally built as a wedding present for Bess and Logan Myers by Bess' father, Mr. C.C.Cress (and mother Margaret). The house was later owned by Mr. Cogan's grandparents, Thomas and Minnie Schultz Cogan.

## Interesting stories

A challenge was reported in the newspaper to find any town that had five men who weighed as much as North Liberty's **five largest men**. They weighed a total of 1580 pounds. The five men were:

Milo Gordon -- 371 pounds  
J.H. Lininger -- 320 pounds  
C.E. Stewart -- 310 pounds  
M.J. Stoner -- 285 pounds  
S.P. Finch -- 285 pounds

The challenge was issued by the town's mayor.

At the time, the town's whole population was only 250.

When Dr. Charles E. Stewart was a postal inspector, he went to Clinton, Iowa. There he caused quite a stir, because **everyone thought he was President Taft**. So many people were fooled that the newspaper wrote an article about it. I guess if you want to know what Dr. Stewart looked like, you can find a picture of President Taft.



Mr. A.S. (Bert) Bane was the owner of a horse named Rollie, which he bought from Rollie Alt in 1910. In 1956 there was an article in the Iowa Press Citizen about this horse. It was called an "**Equine Methuselah**." The horse was 46 years old. Mr. Bane himself was 80 years old at the time. It may have been the same horse that Bert used to pull the "huckster wagon" for H.A. White. Bert would take items from Mr. White's store and sell them around the countryside. It was more convenient for the customers and brought more sales for Mr. White.

When the road was widened north of town, a **giant cottonwood tree** had to be removed. The circumference of the tree was 22 feet and 7 inches. It was 85 feet tall. It took 130 sticks of dynamite to blast it out.



# Soldiers From Penn and Madison Townships Buried in Ridgewood and Alt Cemeteries

## Ridgewood Cemetery

### Blackhawk War

David Crozier- NE corner of old part of cemetery

### Civil War

David Stewart, Surgeon	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	Lot 1, Wray Cemetery
Isaac Albright	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	N part of old cemetery
Simon Alloway	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf. --	N part of old cemetery
Jonathan Alloway	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf. --	Old cemetery (was a fifer & wounded at Berwick)
Daniel Beltz	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	Old cemetery
John C. Chamberlin	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	N side of old cemetery
Samuel Green	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	Lot 13 DW addition
Alexander L. Moreland	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.-	Lot 3 Wray
Joseph R. Snively	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.	Lot 15 Hitching Grounds
Michael F. Snively	Co.E.28 Iowa Inf.--	Lot 15 Hitching Grounds
John Arnold	PA Ringold Cavalry --	Old cemetery
James W. Bane	Co.I.22 Iowa --	Lot 34 DW addition
Patrick Boyle	Co.G.14 & 47 Iowa--	E side of old cemetery
Lewis E. Chamberlin	Co.G.47 Reg.Ia.Vol.Inf.--	Lot 21 DW addition
Thomas Crozier	Co.G.47 Iowa Inf.--	Lot 22 DW addition
Daniel W. Green	Co.G.6 Iowa Inf.--	Lot 9 Wray Cemetery
Jair Wildman	Co.G.47 Iowa Inf.--	W side old cemetery
William W. Evans	Co.H.155.2nd Inf.--	W side old cemetery
Thomas Hackett	PA Inf.--	Lot 23 DW addition
John Madden	Sgt.Co.D.37 Iowa Inf.--	E side of old cemetery
Bascom Mason	Co.M.6 --	Lot 45 DW addition
Isaac Meyers	2nd Iowa Cavalry--	Lot 10 Wray cemetery
Jacob Frank Price	56th Penn Regiment--	Lot 16 Wray cemetery
John Ramsey	Penn Inf.--	E side old cemetery
John F. Ramsey	-- ?	Lot 15 DW addition
David Sentman	Co.K.199 PA Inf.--	W side old cemetery
Charles P. Slaght	Co.K Iowa Cavalry	NE side old cemetery



Andrew H. Statler	Musician 13th Iowa Inf.	E lot 7 Hitching Grounds
Lindsay Varner	Cpl.Co.H.6 West VA Inf.	SW old cemetery
Joseph Wildman	PA Inf.	SW old cemetery
William Work	Co.D.15 Iowa Inf.	Lot 41 DW addition
Joseph H. Work	?	Lot 12 DW addition
John Zahradnek	Co.B.2 Iowa Inf.	W side old cemetery
Lewis R. Wolfe	Co.I.6th Iowa Cavalry	?
Harmon Franklin	?	SE old cemetery

## Peace Time Veterans

William Schulman      US Marine Corps

## Soldiers from the area that served in the Civil War, not buried in local cemeteries

John W. Bane, 22nd Iowa Volunteers, killed in the battle of Winchester  
 Calvin H. Bane, 22nd Iowa Infantry Co.A , wounded at Cedar Creek Va.  
 Joseph H. Work, 22nd Iowa Infantry Co.B, killed at Vicksburg  
 Elmer J.C. Bealer, 22nd Iowa Infantry Co.A  
 George W. Alt, 22nd Iowa Inf.Co.A  
 John W. Alt, 22nd Iowa Inf.Co.A  
 Jacob Kepford, 22nd Iowa Inf.Co.G, wounded at Cedar Creek Va. 1864  
 Jacob Zeller, 22nd Iowa Inf.Co.H, died at Jackson Mississippi  
 Elias C. Brant, 28 Iowa Inf.Co.E  
 James E. Colony, 28 Iowa Inf.Co.E  
 Nathan Gould, 28 Iowa Inf.Co.E  
 John Weno, 28 Iowa Inf.CoE, died at Champion Hills, Mississippi  
 Frederick Albright, 6th Cavalry Co.I  
 D.W. Chamberlin, 6th Cavalry  
 Gurdin A. Denison, 6th Cavalry  
 William Albright, 47th Iowa Inf.Co.G  
 David W.M. Green, 47th Iowa Inf.Co.G  
 Amos Moreland, 28th Iowa Inf.Co.E, captured 1864  
 John E. Moreland, 28th Iowa Inf. Co.E  
 Elias Hawk, 28th Iowa Inf.  
 Sabert Ramsey, Co.E.28th Iowa, he was a musician

Some battles were mentioned in the article "The Day at North Liberty" which was written either 32 years after the war or 32 years after the beginning of the war. The address was given by Dr. David Stewart who had been a surgeon in the war and moved to North Liberty soon after.

"Donaldson, Iuka, Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek...where the battle would have been lost had it not been for the Iowa soldiers." (Wilson's Creek must have been a major event for Iowa soldiers as it was also mentioned by Gov. Kirkwood)

Iowa sent 80,000 soldiers which was a lot for a young state. It was one half of all who were able to bear arms in the state.

Dr. Stewart reported:

3,000 dead in battle,

10,000 died from wounds

Over 10,000 more were discharged from sickness caused by conditions in service

The following is a patriotic quote from Stewart's speech:

"We hope also to teach (the children) to love liberty and independence, for we think we have in this free land of America the freest, the purest and best country on the face of the globe. There is nothing to prevent the poorest boy in our presence from holding the highest office in our land if he qualifies himself for it."

## World War II

Ralph Bane, who entered Europe with the D-Day force, said in a letter home that for the first time in 53 days, he was able to sleep with his shoes off.

## North Liberty Band

The band stand was located on the west side of Main Street, at the corner of Cherry. It was to the west of the school. The band began in 1905 (according to Irving Weber) and lasted until World War II. In the 1920's, it was great entertainment to listen to the band play. The Ladies Foreign Missionary Society (also known as Ladies Aid Society) had a food stand in front of the school house. According to Delma Dale Dever, everything was ten cents. The food ranged from chicken sandwiches to pie and cake. Ivy Meyers was famous for her hickory nut cake. In season, strawberries and ice cream were served. Iced tea and coffee were the drinks available.

On concert evenings, people would come early and park their cars on both sides of Cherry Street. If they liked the music, they would often honk their horns.

The town even voted a tax to help with the expenses of a band director. The first band director that could be remembered was F. R. Spevacek. Other directors were Clingman, Krotz, Berkey, Green and McIlhenny. The band practiced in the winter.

To earn more money, the band once held a "laugh play" called "The Womanless Wedding." Logan Myers was the groom and his bride was Mart Stoner. Family members were played by Robert Price, Dan Overholt, Ed Myers, George Young, Lloyd Myers, L.L. Lentz, Jesse Musgrave, Purl Sentman and Wendyll Stoner. Bridesmaids were Mr. Kadlec and Joe Alt. Other band members filled the rest of the cast. The house was packed for this show and greatly loved by the audience.

### North Liberty Band at Sharon Center July 4, 1924

**1st row front, left to right:** George Young, Joe Alt, Howard Wray, Wendyl Stoner, Lowell Meyers, Ervin Lininger, drum Lewis Lentz, ??, Edward Meyers **2nd row** ??, Dan Overholt, Ike Meyers, Dale Anderson, Jim Cipera, ??, Lloyd Wray, ??, Clarence Brant, ?? **Last row** Byron Cogan, ??, Pearl Sentman, Earl Dodd, Jess Musgrave, Leader Clingerman, Robert Lininger, Pete Reasland, Robert Price, ?? Grant Horn, ??? Missing Logan Myers and Harold Augustine



Find the articles from the newspaper titled "Band Gives Laugh Play" and North Liberty Band Boasts Rich History by Irving Weber".

## More Interesting Stories

I believe the **oldest newlywed** to have lived in North Liberty was Ira Chamberlin. After having been married for 72 years to his first wife Ella Bane, she died in 1951. In 1954, at the age of 95 years, Ira married a much younger woman of 76 years, Stella Putnam. Mr. Chamberlin had no children by either wife and he died in 1958 with an estate worth \$171,497. There was a lengthy lawsuit over his inheritance. It was quite a scandal at the time.

W. F. Murphy came with his parents on the first train ever to come to Iowa City in 1857. He spent his boyhood near North Liberty. His advice for living to be old was "Take a cold shower each morning, get up at 4:00 to exercise the horses, and abstain from liquor, tobacco, and card playing." He planned to read every mystery in the Iowa City library.

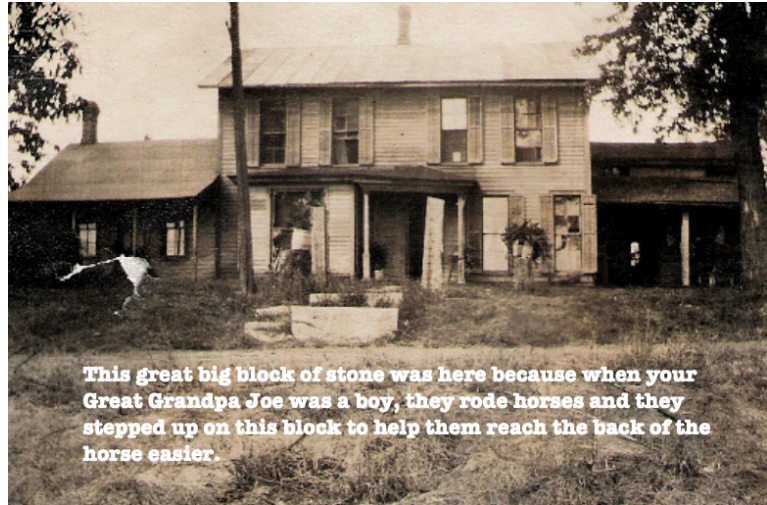
On June 7, 1915, **five men who were all born in the year 1849** met for a reunion. The five men were Samuel Lininger, Nicholas Zeller, Jno. W. Green, Rev. L. F. Chamberlin and C.D. Hawk. They called their group the Forty-Niners Circle. They reminisced about other things which happened in 1849, for example, gold was discovered in California, cholera was widespread, and disastrous earthquakes happened in the Mississippi Valley.

Charles Alt found a 16 pound tooth in a creek bed on his farm. (Larry Ogden now lives on the farm "Seven Oaks" where the tooth was found) The tooth was taken to George Kay of the University of Iowa Geology Department. Mr. Kay immediately identified it as a mammoth tooth, at least 2,000 years old. The tooth was 12 inches long, 4 inches wide and 10 inches thick. A few years before, Mr. Alt had found a smaller four-pound mammoth tooth.

# Grandpa's House

This house was built by Joseph Sr. on land he obtained from the United States Government in the early 1840's. His first house was log cabin. The fore part with the porch, was the kitchen. It had a large fireplace made with rock. later years, a kitchen range stood front. The fireplace was then used to store wood. The kitchen range had a copper reservoir attached to one end. This was used to heat soft rain water, that off the house roof into a large

cistern, by the use of spouting. This water was pumped and carried into the house, a bucket full at a time, to be used for washing clothes, dishes, faces and hands. Beside the stove was a kitchen cabinet where flour, and small kitchen utensils were stored. The top was used for a work bench. On the left hand edge was a wash basin, used for washing face and hands. We would use the hot water from the reservoir. The waste water was thrown out the back door or poured into a waste water bucket. Also on the top of the cabinet was a place for the drinking water bucket. The water was carried in from a forty foot dug well. A dipper was immersed in the water bucket. Anyone taking a drink used the same dipper. A looking glass was hung on the wall beside the cabinet, it was used to see while combing hair or shaving. My father used a shaving mug and lathered his face with a brush before shaving. He used a straight razor, which was very sharp. He kept it that way by using a leather strap or a hone. On the wall next to the fireplace the guns were hung. A 12 gauge double barrel shot gun, and a Winchester 22 caliber repeating rifle 1890 model. Inside the outside door was a place to hang clothes. Along the south wall was a walnut wood lounge. This had a straw filled tick on it. After threshing every year, the tick was refilled with fresh straw. This was a great place to take naps, also for a little fox terrier dog to sleep. The dining table was also in the kitchen. My mother's meals consisted mostly of home raised produce. Never a meal without potatoes some form or other. She raised chickens, so she fixed chicken or eggs. My father had beef and pork butchered. it would keep in the winter, for summer the beef was canned. The pork was processed in various ways. The extra fat was trimmed off, cut in small pieces and rendered outside in a large kettle over a



Alt

a

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hot fire. When the contents boiled for a few minutes, it was emptied into a lard press. The hot lard ran into a container. The solid part that was left was called cracklings. They were very good to eat. The leaner part of the meat was trimmed off and ground into sausage meat. The hams and bacons were hung in the smoke house and smoked with hickory wood. There was always home made bread and butter on the table. Going back to the kitchen arrangement, a pantry was a little room by itself, off the north west wall. This was where the kitchen supplies needed for cooking were kept. There was a stairway leading off the pantry to the cellar. This had a large potato bin and a place to store other vegetables and fruit. The ice box refrigerator was outside on the porch. Ice was cut and hauled from the river every winter and stored in the ice house. Aside from using it in the ice box, it was used for making ice cream and for cooling ice tea and lemonade. Also in the kitchen was a built in cupboard to store dishes & silverware. Underneath was a place for storing linen & a shoe repair box containing a shoe lasts, hammer & nails. On the top shelf was a gun ammunition shot gun shells, rifle cartridges, a 28 caliber six shooter, etc.

On the south side of the kitchen was a porch, where many enjoyable evenings were spent. Resting after a long days work, looking out over the country side watching night settling over the land. On the back porch was a wood range where cooking was done in the summer time and water was heated in a big copper wash boiler, for washing clothes. There was a double tub washing machine powered by a 1 cylinder gasoline engine. Also on the porch were the cream separators. There were two kinds of cream separators. One, the cold water was poured in with the milk, the cream would raise to the top, a spigot on the bottom was used to drain the water mixed with milk off, then the cream was drained out. The other way the fresh milk was poured into a container, cold water was poured around it. The advantage here, the separated milk could be used. Later a mechanical separator was used. It separated the cream from the milk by centrifugal force.

The main house was sort of a double house. When Dad & Mom got married, Grandpa built a kitchen onto the west end of the house, for he & Grandma to use. The house was heated by a wood stove. Sometimes the sides would get red hot, the damper in front would then be closed. it was nice laying on the floor behind the stove to stay nice and warm. The dogs thought so too. There was a kerosene hanging lamp, for light. Later on there was a Coleman gasoline pressure mantle lamp, which was a big improvement. The upstairs had four bedrooms. They were unheated, in the wintertime the covers were piled high. Mother and Hazel raised a couple of orphan pigs. The money they received for them bought the first radio. It was a Crosley Triadyne. It ran with A, B, and C dry cell batteries. We could hear stations in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Cincinnati and local stations. Notice the bell on the pole out



front. The bell was rung to call people in to dinner or an emergency. A grindstone, used for sharpening axes, sat in the corner of the yard.

This house was the setting of many happy occasions. Family living, births, reunions, weddings. Agda and I were married here Sept. 18, 1936. Elizabeth and George were born while we lived there. There was also sorrowful times. Grandpa Joseph died there January 27, 1904. After his death, Grandma took to her bed and died 9 days later.

This is a picture of the old barn. It had a hewed log frame, put together and held by wooden pins. it was a task to do all the work by hand labor. It was a basement barn, room for horses and cattle underneath. Every horse had a place. When the door was opened, each horse went to their place and waited to be tied up. The milk cows would be tied up also. When it was time to milk we would sit on a milk stool between the cows with a milk pail between our legs to squirt the milk into. Some times there was a cat waiting for a squirt too. The upper part of the barn, the double doors were opened, a wagon loaded with hay would be pulled into the barn to be unloaded. On top of the barn was a track on which a carrier with a hay fork was used to unload the hay by means of a rope. The two sheds attached to the barn were for two stallions. Notice the pile of wood to be sawed into chunks. Wood was used entirely for fuel. The farm yard was flat on top of a hill overlooking the country side to South and West.



This is Mom & Dad, Rollie & Emma, standing in front of the big bay window. Notice the wax plant vine hanging in the window. This area inside was a great place for flowers.



A seven passenger Studebaker touring car, Hazel won by getting the most subscriptions for an Iowa City newspaper contest.

We also had a team of ponies named Ted & Ned, Dad took Hazel around over the country with them to get subscriptions for the paper.



Kit and Fanny, a team I grew up with.



A pond out back of the barn. It was the home of big snapping turtles as well as a heaven for big bull frogs. I loved to hear the frogs in the evenings. In the winter time, the kids from Liberty would come down to skate. Many good times were enjoyed. In the evenings a fire was sometimes made which added to the fun.

I had a Duroc Jersey sow. The money I got from raising her pigs, helped me through High School.



A view of the woodpile

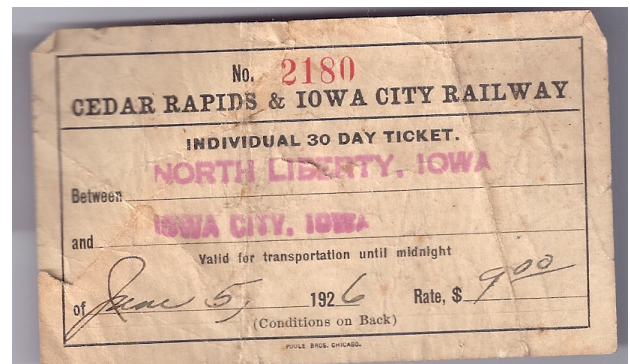
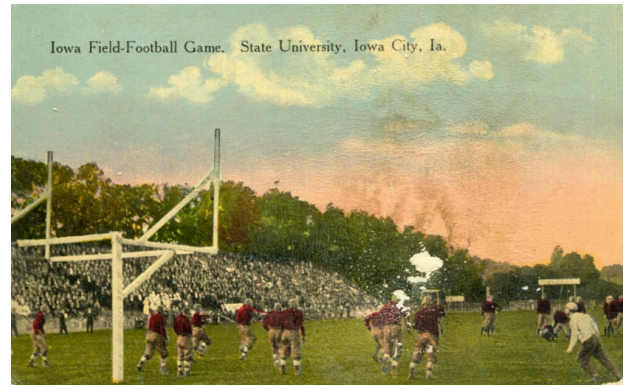
In the summer time it was my job to bring in the milk cows from the timber pasture. One cow usually had a cow bell on. If I was lucky, I could tell by the sound of the bell where they were. Sometimes they would be perfectly quiet in a brushy place. I enjoyed going after the cows, I was always a good walker. In nice weather the cows were kept in the barn yard. They were trained to stand, so we could walk up to them, sit down on a milk stool, and start milking. The milk was carried to the house where it was separated, the cream from the milk. There were two types of water separators. One type the water from the well was poured into the milk. The cream would rise to the top. The water and milk would be drained off, leaving the cream, the be drained off later. The other type the cold water was poured around the container of milk. This way the milk could be used for drinking or other uses. Later on a mechanical separator was used. This separated the cream from the milk by centrifugal force. The cream was delicious on cereal, on strawberries, for making home made ice cream and for making butter. The butter that was not used for eating, was taken to the store, and sold or traded on groceries. Later the cream was sold at a cream station. Eggs were also sold or traded on groceries.

Selling hogs or cattle was always an interesting time. Whichever it was, was driven to North Liberty, to be loaded onto a stock car, or sold locally. The last time hogs were driven to Liberty, was when the paving was put in. We had trouble getting across it. Trucks were then used to market livestock. A big change from hauling in a wagon or sled. In those days the neighbors would help haul, with their teams with wagons or sleds.

In the fall of 1921 I started to University High School in Iowa City. It didn't take long to find out Iowa, SUI as it was called in those days, had a good football team. Howard



Jones was the coach. That year they were unbeaten, even snapping Knute Rockne's Notre Dame twenty-game winning streak. The 1922 team went East and beat Yale 6 to nothing. I remember the celebration that took place on Monday. This was the start of following Iowa football. The old Iowa playing field was at the West end of Washington Street, just West of the present day library. The entrance was under the Crandic lines track. On game Saturday's the Crandic would use all rolling stock available, to haul passengers from Cedar Rapids. The Interurban with rail road cars that run from an electric trolley wire, commenced to run between downtown Cedar Rapids and downtown Iowa City August 14, 1904. This was a big service to the people who were in horse and buggy days. A few farmers along the line that milked cows and shipped the milk to Sidwells in Iowa City. The milk was picked up on the same early car that the High School students went to Iowa City on. Thirty day tickets were available at 9 dollars a month. The bearer could ride back and forth as many times as they liked between a designated station and Iowa City.



Going to University High School is one of the high points of my life. It broadened my perception for life. Completing four years of the required courses and receiving a diploma built up confidence in myself.

# Tragedies

According to Grandpa Rollie's diary, his brother George and Dora Colony were married on November 9, 1882. They moved to Tiffin, some 10 miles away, but visited often. On January 29, 1884 they arrived at "the home place" and unwrapped their young baby only to find that it had smothered to death on the trip over. (Updated note: Later news article said it was determined the baby died of heart disease, not smothering.)

Our readers will remember an item which appeared in our columns last week relative to the smothering of the little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Alt, of North Liberty. The physician who examined the child say it was not smothered, but that its death was caused by heart disease. This must afford some relief to the agonized parents who now know that no care on their part could have prevented the sad death of their first born.

Page 3 of The Iowa City Daily Republican, published in Iowa City, Iowa on Thursday, February 7th, 1884

Guy and Maxine Myers began their married life with many hopes. They had four children, but not a single one survived childhood. The grief they lived with had such an affect on their lives that they eventually separated. Two of their children died as infants. They later found that the water on their farm was toxic to infants, but not adults. Another child was caught in the power take-off of the tractor and was injured badly and died. The fourth child died from childhood leukemia. The next time you get mad at your brother or sister, be very glad that they are around, for some families are not so lucky as you.

When Grandma Kepford died in 1892, the roads were so bad that they had to bury my great-great Grandmother in the garden until the roads got better. She died on March 7th and they couldn't get her to the cemetery until April 9th.

S. B. Myers was working with a log at the saw mill when he got pulled into the whirling saw blades. His leg was badly injured and had to be amputated. The amputation was done by Dr. Stewart and Dr. Young. The Young family says that in an old appointment and record book, the accident is mentioned.

Four of the children of Jacob and Martha Albright died of black diptheria in one week. The sickness was carried by a doctor who came to the house. The doctor was so grief stricken he committed suicide. (this occurred while they lived in Audubon for a short while)

# Inventors

In an article called "A Man and His Tools--The Story of the Late David Denison" by Robert P. Adams, mention was made of the creation of the first breaking plow in this part of the country. It was made by his father (Joseph Denison) and uncle, and with it they broke the first plowed furrow in the township. (This furrow was somewhere in the area of the Centro Plant today) They also fabricated improved models which later were used by others. A breaking plow was needed for prairie soil. Ordinary plows could not handle the thick sod which covered much of the prairie. Breaking plows had to be pulled by oxen. Horses could not usually handle the work of pulling a breaking plow. Dave Denison also like to tinker with tools and gadgets. In addition to farming and being a house mover, he had a rare talent for splicing ropes. To do this, he would cut the rope, ravel the ends, lay them together and splice them back into a whole rope again. Once, he was called to the University of Iowa to splice a huge rope that no one else had been able to mend. Dave was the last surviving child of the family of Joseph Denison. Though he was not married, he had a sister (Julia) who married a Sentman. Stephanie Sentman Rourke of Hills Bank and Trust is descended from this very early pioneer family.

The following information comes from an article titled "Inventors of North Liberty"- ICPC 5/22/41 A Fact a Day About Iowa City, by J.E. R. "

Mr. L.E. Chamberlin and his brother Ira Jr.-- patented an attachment to a tile ditcher. L.E. with his brother-in-law Charles Slaght of Iowa City--invented patented a "CleanSweep hay loader" during the 1890's. L.E. also operated the tile factory at Tiffin, was Secretary of Northwestern Mutual Insurance Co. (Madison Twp)

Have a Look! Have a Look!  
AT  
**The Clean Sweep**



This celebrated Loader is now on exhibition at the Agricultural Warerooms on East LaPorte Street, Plymouth. You should call and examine this machine before placing your order this season.

From the Culver Citizen (Indiana) 5/25/1905

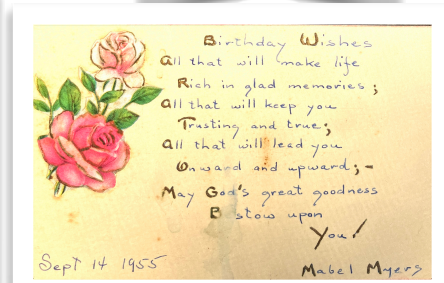
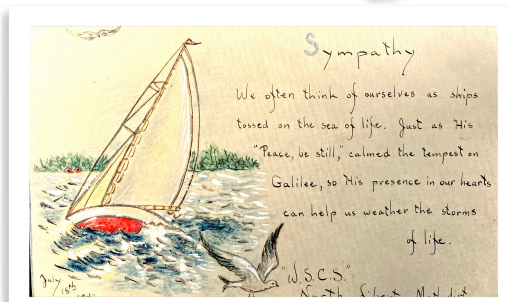
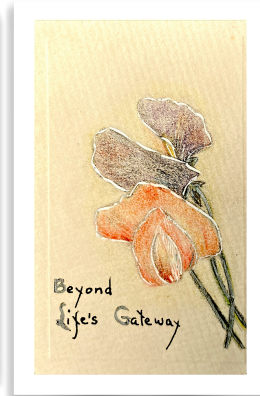
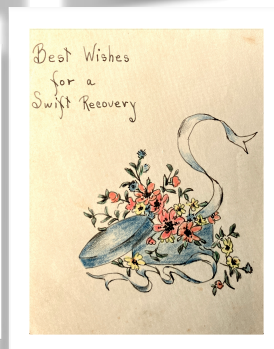
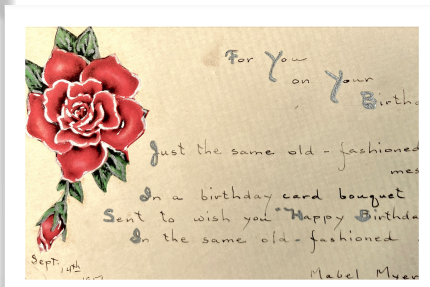
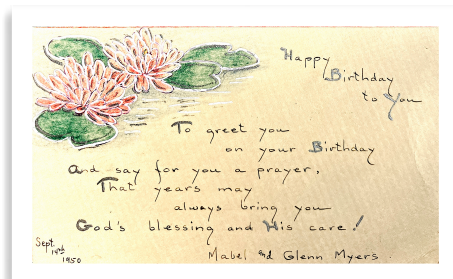
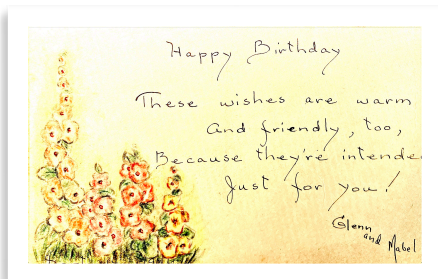
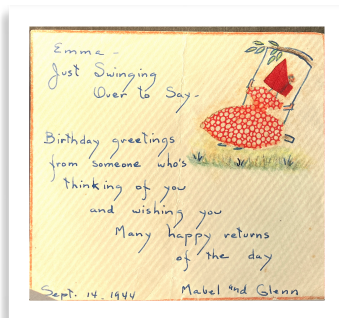
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# Creative and Artistic People

## Mabel Myers

Mabel Myers was an ordinary farm wife as far as I know, but in one way I think she was quite extra-ordinary. Mabel had a talent for drawing and used it to create some beautiful handmade cards which she sent to her friends in the community. I wonder if she was the poet who penned the verses too. In going through some old papers, I came across a number of these cards which had been sent to our house. You can see the delicate colors and what a good artist she was. Some of them have silver accents and some have bits of fabric. The handwriting is lovely too.



## Crozier

Originally I thought the person who took the photos in North Liberty was John Crozier, but a packet of information from an interested person made me aware it was more likely a brother, William N. Crozier. At any rate, one (or more) of the Crozier brothers took many photographs which were made into postcards and distributed to local residents. They were usually carefully labeled in white ink. Without these photos, many buildings and people now long gone, would be completely forgotten and unavailable to future generations except by words. The drawings in this history were made possible by the existence of photos left by the Croziers.



## Tom Gordon

As a small child, I often went to visit my Aunt Hazel Bowman. I never failed to notice and be fascinated by the carvings which sat on her what-not shelf. The one I remember best was a tiny basket carved from a black walnut shell. I called my cousin, Ethel Green, and she said the shelf was also made by Mr. Gordon and was shaped like a maple leaf. She said Tom did other carvings from walnut shells, and other crafty things, all equally fascinating.

# Trees

The following is a list of trees in Johnson County as identified by T. H. MacBride by 1897. The list was published in:

Calvin, Samuel. Geology of Johnson County. Des Moines: Iowa Printing Co., c1897., from Iowa Geological Survey VII. Annual Report, 1897. pp 33-116.

If there is more than one common name, all are listed on the same line.

- Common Pawpaw - found sparingly in southern part of county
- Basswood - common
- Northern Prickly Ash
- Hop-Tree - not common
- Burning Bush - common
- Buckthorn - not rare
- Fetid buckeye - only southwestern part
- Hard Maple, Sugar Maple - not rare
- Soft Maple - common along streams
- Red Maple - rare
- Box Elder - common
- American Bladder-nut - rather frequent
- Smooth sumach - common
- Common locust, Black locust - not rare
- Kentucky Coffee Tree - rare
- Honey Locust - rather common
- Wild Plum - very common
- Choke cherry - common along rocky hillsides
- Wild cherry - frequent
- American crab apple - everywhere common
- Common hawthorn - common
- Red hawthorn - common (large fruit is edible)
- Scarlet thorn - common
- Cockspur thorn - not rare
- Shad-bush, Service-berry, June-berry - common along rocky slopes
- Dogwood - not rare in sandy places
- Red-osier dogwood - common along streams
- Panicked cornel - very common on high grounds
- Arrow-wood - rather rare
- Black haw, Sheep-berry - still quite common along streams

- Black haw - rare ("This and the preceeding species were formerly very common, but the clearing of creek and river bottoms for pasture and farm lands has materially affected both species, the latter perhaps suffering more.")
- Button-bush - common in swampy places
- White ash - common chiefly along streams
- Green ash - less frequent than white ash
- Slippery elm, Red elm - common
- American elm, White elm - very common
- Hackberry - very common along the Iowa river
- Red mulberry - not common, more frequent in northern
- Sycamore, Buttonwood - rather common
- Butternut, White walnut - common on hillsides and along streams
- Black walnut - becoming rather less common. Formerly very abundant along all the streams in the county.
- Hickory - very common, chiefly on higher ground
- Shell-bark. One tree, probably of this species, is found near Iowa City.
- Bitternut, Pig-nut - common, chiefly on higher grounds
- River birch, Red birch - common along the larger streams
- Hazel-nut - very common
- Ironwood, Hop horn-beam - very common chiefly on higher grounds
- Ironwood, American horn-beam - on rocky banks along the smaller streams, less common than the preceeding
- White oak- very common
- Bur oad - very common
- Chestnut oak - found occasionally on rocky hillsides along the Iowa River
- Red oak - common on the higher grounds
- Scarlet oak - common chiefly on the lower grounds
- Quercitron, Black oak - rare
- Swamp oak, Spanish oak, Pin oak - occasional along the Iowa river in northern
- Shingle oak, Laurel oak - found only in southern, where it is not rare on the Iowa river and Old Man's creek bottoms
- Black willow - common along the Iowa river and other streams
- Black willow - common with the preceeding
- Glaucous willow, Pussy willow - quite common on low grounds
- Heart-leaved willow - common on low grounds
- American aspen, Quaking aspen - common generally on low grounds
- Large-toothed aspen, Quaking asp, Poplar - very common, soon taking possession of neglected clearings on higher grounds.
- Cottonwood, Necklace poplar - common on low grounds
- Red cedar - formerly common rocky bluffs along the Iowa river. Now quite rare.

If you would like a challenge, try to find the latin nomenclature for these trees and shrubs.



## Born in 1846

This is a list I found of people born the same year that Iowa became a state.

- Maria Iowa Wray Young
- Miller Young
- Anna Jane Chamberlin
- Barbara E. Myers
- Anne E. Stoner Work
- John A. Koser
- Rebecca Hoover Green
- Anna Grabien
- Anna Zarnick
- Matilda Denison (born and died same year, mother died 1 day before Matilda)

## Girls With Iowa in Their Name

In my research, I have found that a number of girls in the area were given the name Iowa, either as a first name or a middle name. The first one I found was actually born the same year Iowa became a state in 1846. she was Maria Iowa Wray and later married Miller Young who was also born in 1846.

- Maria Iowa Wray Young
- Iowa Myers Lentz
- Iowa Orria
- Iowa Zeller Nichols (daughter of Frank and Georgie Berchenbriter Zeller)
- Iowa Honn (from the Oxford area)

## Unusual Names

As I was going through the records for the cemetery and my grandfather's diaries, I noticed some really unusual names. I thought you might be interested in them too.

- |                       |                |                   |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| • Zanna Ramsey        | • Jair Wildman | • Sove Orb        |
| • Amede Robertson     | • Rynta Ramsey | • Cedelcia Miller |
| • Zura Arnold Sentman | • Rilla Zanner |                   |
| • Sophrona Slaght     |                |                   |



# Telephones

In an article in the newspaper titled "*Last Switchboard system in Area-Dial Phones Come to North Liberty*" it was reported that the North Liberty Mutual Telephone Company was organized on January 17, 1903 as a stock holding company with 51 original subscribers. However, the diaries of my Grandfather, Rollie Alt, indicate that the phones may have been installed before the company was officially organized.

In the entry for January 22, 1902, Rollie says

*"Ira Chamberlin and Hoover came down and put the telephone in, it works fine. They have put in 20 phones now. You can hear talking all over if you listen."*

The next day he wrote

*"Well I did not do much but listen on the telephone. Can hear all kinds of noises on it and someone is talking all the time."*

The original switchboard for the company was located in the grocery store of Frank Stahle who was the first operator. In 1905 it was moved to the house of Bert White who was the next operator. The final location was the house on Main Street just across from the new South Slope building which now houses the dial equipment.

In the early years, each "line" had several families on it. A line was given a number such as 24. Each family on the line had a "ring" number assigned to it. Ours used to be 4, so our number was 244. Each number had its own specific ring combination.

- 1 = a long ring
- 2 = a long ring and a short ring
- 3 = a long ring and two short rings
- 4 = a long ring and three short rings
- 5 = a short ring and a long ring
- 6 = two short rings and a long ring
- 7 = three short rings and a long ring
- 8 = a long ring, a short ring and a long ring
- 9 = a long ring, two short rings and a long ring
- 10 = a long ring, three short rings and a long ring
- 11 = two long rings
- 12 = two long rings and a short ring
- etc.

When the phone rang, each person on the line had to listen to the ring combination to know if the call was for them. The ring was not automatic. The operator on the other end was making the rings by pressing on a little switch for the length of the rings. They had to decide when to ring the phone again if no one answered right away. If you picked up the phone, you could hear the conversation even if it was not for you. Most people were honest and did not listen to other conversations. Some people were nosy and listened to everything just to get the gossip. If they had a ticking clock or some other noise that could be identified, you always knew who was "rubbernecking" on your conversation. Sometimes it was useful to be able to listen in this way, because the operator could send out "general rings". The general ring was just a very, very long ring. Everyone knew that you should rush to the phone and listen because it was something you should hear. It might be about a death in the community, a tornado warning, or some other community event that needed to be known. Another advantage of a "party" line was that if there was an emergency at your house, you knew that your neighbors wouldn't mind if you got on the line and interrupted so you could get help.

On the other end, at the switchboard, the operator knew when a person needed to call someone else. The caller rang their phone and the electrical impulse made a tiny door drop down on the switchboard. The doors were numbered with each line number (ours was 24). The operator would plug a cord into the hole and then the operator could talk to the person to find out who they wanted to call. It was helpful to have a real person to talk to (the operator) because they could tell you if "Grandma" was not home but went over to "Mrs. So and So's" house. Then they would ring that house for you instead.



If there was a fire, the operator would trigger the fire alarm and then give a general ring on the lines where the volunteer firemen lived and tell them where the fire was.

There was no such thing as the busy signal we know today.

The operator's family lived in the house where the switchboard was. The operator had to be on duty all night long. They could go to bed and put the loud night ringer on. It was always startling to hear it in the middle of a sound sleep. There were usually a few people trained to be



relief operators who worked during the day or when operator was sick or out of town. As the town grew, extra operators were trained to help out on a larger switchboard which was installed. Two operators could work side by side to provide faster service to more customers. If it was easy for each person on a party line to listen to any conversation, it was even easier for the operator to listen to any conversation. Operators were chosen for their honesty and ethical behavior as well as their operating abilities.



Storms were very hard on phone service. The phone lines were fastened to poles and ran through the air. Strong winds, ice, and electrical storms often put one or more lines out of service. When the company became owned by South Slope and converted to the dial phones we know today, the lines were buried underground and problems of this type were almost non-existent.

I know that the Jim Hudson family lived in and operated the switchboard. Agda and Joe Alt (my parents) and I were the last to live in the telephone office. When the plans to convert were made, it was hard to find someone who was willing to live in the office for the time it took to make all the changes. My parents took the job on because they knew it was important. It was a very big change in our lives, but it didn't last too long. I graduated from high school the year that the changeover was made and the family moved back to the farm where I was raised. Operators on duty when the conversion was made were Helen Davis (20 year veteran), Agda Alt (20 years), Hazel Bowman (16 years), Kaye Kasper and Joanne Hemphill (2 years each) and Beth Taylor (1 year). Joan and Elizabeth Alt were both part-time operators at one time.

The company had grown from 51 members to over 186 stockholders. The number of patrons had grown to over 450 by 1967. On Dec. 7, 1967 the old company merged with South Slope Co-operative Telephone Co. and dial phones became the newest change. Gone were the party lines. All the dial phone lines were one line to each house or private lines. Agda Alt continued to work for the telephone company as a secretary in the new office, just across the street from the old one. Agda retired in time, and eventually the billing and office work was transferred to the main office in Norway, Iowa. The building now just houses equipment.

J.R. Brumley, who was once a lineman, now holds a top position with the company. The vision of this small co-operative has been excellent, offering services and advancements that keep pace with the biggest of companies. Where once upon a time patrons had to turn a crank to ring the phone and step up to a voice receiver to talk, now patrons can make use of voice mail, internet, call waiting and a state-of-the-art teleconferencing center.

# Women

The thoughts in the beginning of this section were assisted by a reading from a book edited by Linda Kerber and Jane Sherron de Hart called Refocusing the Past 3rd ed. (NY : Oxford University Press, c1991). The chapter was titled "The Midwestern Farming Family, 1850" by John Mack Faragher.

To understand a woman's life in the pioneer days of early North Liberty, you need a glimpse of what life was like for everyone else in the family, and on other homesteads too. Today, we don't depend on the cycles of nature as the settlers did.

1. Their lives depended on the **cycle of day and night** because there were no electric yard lights, or flashlights to use at night. They didn't have tractors with headlights to work after dark. The kitchen was lighted with firelight and candle or lantern light, and it wasn't that great.
2. Their lives depended on the **cycle of the seasons**. Most of the early pioneers lived from the land. They couldn't run to the store for a can of corn or peaches, they had to grow or kill their own food. Part of the year they could do little while the other part of the year was frantically busy preparing for the winter.
3. Their lives depended on the **cycle of growth**. Crops grew and were harvested. Livestock grew and reproduced or were eaten. Families grew and helped earn the living. Some things like dandelion greens matured very early and provided spring tonic. Other things grew slowly and had to be planned for like fruit trees.
4. Their lives depended on the **cycle of reproduction**. Crops produced seeds, livestock produced young, women produced children, and when things did not increase as hoped for, farms did not prosper.

Work was not considered to be "the opposite of leisure, but as a life requirement for everyone, regardless of sex or age." This means that everyone worked all day long at whatever had to be done. William Howells remembered "Whoever had the strength to work, took hold and helped." If women often did "women's work" it may have been out of physical necessity, but each chore they did was to achieve the common goals of the family, to survive and prosper.

Some of the work commonly done by men or women was:

Men

forestry and deforestation  
upkeep of tools, property, barns  
construction  
hunting, large animal butchering  
fieldwork  
defense

Women

growing, collecting, butchering  
upkeep of house, washing, cleaning  
making of clothes  
watering, taking care of hens, dairy  
food preserving, preparing  
childbearing and raising

You might say that often what women did tended to be of immediate usefulness. The hens laid eggs for breakfast. The cow gave milk to drink for dinner. The wool was spun and woven for a new shirt next week. The labor of the men often was not useful as quickly. The bull they bought meant a fine herd of cows in the future. The land they dug stumps from would eventually be a fine field for raising crops. The corn might produce enough to feed the stock and family with some left over to sell in the fall.

In 1850 in the Midwest, the average size of a family was 5.7. One in five children born, died before their 5th birthday, and at least one in five died before they were born. The mean age for marriage was 25.1 for men, and 20.5 for women. Women raised children from around the age of 20 until they were about 35. So you can see that life was pretty busy and sometimes very hard. It wasn't any harder for women than it was for men, but it may have affected them differently. If you look at how many pioneers lived to be very old in the community of North Liberty, you will understand that the hardships sometimes helped to make them strong. Eric Sloane in his book Seasons of America's Past (NY : Promontory Press, c1988) noted that an 1832 special census of all those in the U.S. over the age of 100 years, showed that 1 in 4,500 was over 100 years of age. At the time of his book in 1988, the figure was only 1 in 34,000. So even with all their hard work, and even with all our medical knowledge and conveniences, you were more likely to live a long time in pioneer days.

Eric Sloane in the same book, gave some interesting facts about one of a pioneer woman's jobs. He said a "wool spinning wheel was 11 feet in circumference. It took 40 revolutions to make a "knot" and it took 10 knots to make a "skein". A woman could spin four to five skeins a day (about 2 1/2 miles of yarn), and a woman walked over 15 miles going back and forth from the wheel to the spindle." That is only what it took to make the yarn. They still had to weave it into cloth and sew it into clothing. It is no wonder that they hated to throw away any of that precious homemade cloth. Once a piece of clothing was worn out, every corner that was still good was saved for a quilt.

For many women, making quilts was an outlet for their creativity, and a quiet and relaxing activity. Often, the quilting of it was an occasion for getting together with the neighbors. In the "Midwestern Farming Family, 1850" article, there was a quote about quilting which I really enjoyed. It was said by "an old Kentucky woman" named Aunt Jane. She said

*"You see you start out with just so much caliker (calico); you don't go out to the store and pick it out and buy it, but the neighbors will give you a piece here and there, and you will have a piece left every time you cut out a dress, and you take what happens to come and that's predestination. But when it comes to cuttin' out why you're free to choose your patterns. You can give the same kind o' piece to two persons, and one will be a Nine Patch and one'll make a Wild Goose Chase and there'll be two quilts made out o' the same kind of pieces, and jest as different as they can be, and that is just the way with livin.' The Lord sends in the pieces, but we can cut 'em out and put 'em together pretty much to suit ourselves."*

In my grandmother Emma's diary from 1888, she says on March 13,  
*"Ma put in the quilt Grandma give me."*

And on following days she noted that they quilted all or part of the days. On the other side of my family, grandmother Eldeen (my mother's mother) made quilts for each of her 13 children and each of her over 30 grandchildren. One of the most beautiful of them is the state flower quilt. It has hand embroidered blocks with the state bird and flower of every state. Most of the others are patchwork quilts, made from the scraps that our Mothers' sent to Grandma.

I haven't read all of my Grandmother Emma's diaries, but in the future I will try to add to this story of pioneer women and include more of the information in them. For now, I just want to include parts of some entries that show what sort of work she had to do. At the time she wrote these entries in 1888 and 1889, she was only about 20 years old and not yet married. I suspect on many days she did much more work than she cared to write about.

*June 8-I scrubbed and churned today.*

*August 4-I swept upstairs and down this a.m., scrubbed the kitchen and porch.*

*August 11-I churned this morning, scrubbed and baked a cake this a.m.*

*August 18-I baked a cake today, cleaned up the house and washed the kitchen windows.*

*Sep 1-I finished ironing this a.m., swept the boys room & hall, preserved some plums and baked a cake this afternoon.*

*Sep 8-I made some crab butter this forenoon, 3 gallons, & cleaned up the house, baked a cake this eve.*

*Sep 22-I scrubbed the kitchen poarch & walk today, went to the timber & gathered a basket full of butternuts, swept the parlor.*



Though Grandma did quite a lot of work, she also mentions many fun events. She sang in a choir, went to literary meetings, political rallies, fairs, skating, and sometimes went to three different churches on a Sunday at the request of different friends. She was quite proud of her flowers and plants.

Also in the future, I would like to tell the story of my mother's family who grew up in South Dakota. Her mother was a midwife, and highly respected and needed in her community. So, some talk may be heard of downtrodden women in pioneer days, but they played an important part in family and community life, and the life of the men was not easy either. I suspect that strong-minded women had just as much control over their lives and choices then as now, but the times were different, and their choices followed a different set of criteria.

This quilt piece is a log cabin quilt made out of already used wool pieces. Because of the coarser texture, it was not quilted with small stitches, but rather tied at regular intervals. The backing is flannel. In the winter, many houses were not heated upstairs and heavy quilts like this one were very welcome on cold winter nights. This quilt has been in our family from my earliest memories.



Part of a  
pillow case  
made from  
old silk ties  
and dresses

Part of a crazy quilt  
pillow case made from  
scraps and stitched with  
fancy stitches, all  
different



## Fire Department

The first fire equipment in the North Liberty area was purchased by farmers in Penn and Madison Townships who formed the North Bend Fire Truck Association. Each farmer bought a share. An agreement was made with North Liberty for the operation and housing of the equipment. A volunteer fire company was formed. North Liberty was to have the use of the equipment for their own fire protection.

In order for everyone to have fire protection, on December 2, 1955, the Penn and Madison Township Trustees met with the board of directors of the North Bend Fire Truck Association. It was agreed that the two townships form a tax supported fire district and it would buy the equipment from the North Bend Fire Truck Association, keeping the same agreement with the town.

The number of buildings in the area grew rapidly. The volunteer firemen demanded more and bigger equipment to fight fires.

In 1972 the 1955 agreement was terminated. A new agreement provided for North Liberty to purchase fire equipment and to allow the townships to purchase fire protection from the town. The agreement took effect on January 1, 1973.

Taxable valuations as of January 1, 1990 were as follows:

Penn	\$81 mil. valuation @.405/1000 = \$33,210 cost of fire protection
No.L	\$43 mil. valuation @.405/1000 = \$17,587 cost of fire protection
Madi.	\$16 mil. valuation @.405/1000 = \$6,838 cost of fire protection

The North Liberty Volunteer Fire Department and First Responders provide excellent service to the community and they are well equipped to handle all emergencies.



# Post Office

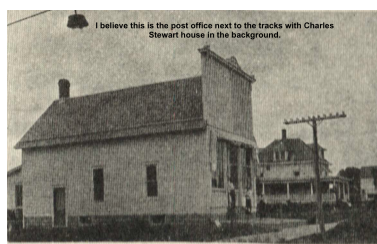
Before a post office was established, the newspaper in Iowa City used to advertise the names of people who had mail that was not collected. In an 1841 issue of the "Iowa City State Reporter" notice was given that John Alt (among others) had mail waiting to be claimed. In another issue of that year, the post office advertised for a carrier from Iowa City to Marion, to run only once a week.

First post office in North Liberty was run by Dr. Orrin who also built the first house in the town proper.

In 1866, Robert Stewart ran the post office in a room in the Stewart house. His license was signed by William Dennison postmaster general of U.S.

1877, H.A. White became postmaster and in 1882 a notary public.

At one time the building next to Meyers and Price was the post office, run by Scott and Ellen Hackett. There was one rural route. Milo Gordon was the carrier. He carried mail with horse and carriage. John Myers or John Ramsey hauled all the outgoing and incoming mail with a wheel barrow to the interurban depot in the teens.



The post office was moved to depot in 1918 when James Mehaffey became postmaster. Jim was also a ticket agent at the depot and his mother Mary took care of the Post Office. James held the office for 30 years. He died in 1949.

In 1949, the post office was moved to the east end of the Kohl Building. John Weno was postmaster. Glenn Herring was a mail carrier. Other mail carriers were Dan Overholt, Ray Lininger and others.

A new post office was finished and began use in 1973.



# Geology

Calvin, Samuel. Geology of Johnson County. Des Moines: Iowa Printing Co., c1897. Iowa Geological Survey VII. Annual Report, 1897. pp 33-116.

Briggs, John E. "A Geological Palimpsest." Palimpsest, November 1920, pp 133-142.

Before you begin reading, please keep in mind that the readings where much of this information came from are quite old. You can find modern geologic histories in the books in the library today. If there have been any new discoveries or changes in the geologic history, it will be up to you to find out about them.

I think the last paragraph of the article by John Briggs sums up Iowa Geologic history very well. "Age after age, as the sea and the land contended and the species struggled to live, the drama of the world was faithfully recorded. Sometimes, to be sure, the story is partly erased, sometimes it is lost beneath subsequent records, but at some place or other in Iowa a fragment of each act may be found. The surface of Iowa is a palimpsest of the ages." (Briggs, p142)

The geologic record of Iowa, at least the part that can be observed, began very long ago when Iowa was under the sea. Ten millions of years or more later, thousands of feet of sediment and sea life lay at the bottom. The sea went down and left Iowa dry, and then covered Iowa with water again at least four more times. Each time, more and different kinds of living creatures and plants left traces of their existence in the rocks which formed. Finally the sea left Iowa for the last time, only to make way for the glaciers of ice which twice covered Iowa completely, and three times more, covered parts of Iowa. Both the sea and the glaciers left traces which made a big difference to life in the North Liberty area. The sea left the limestone which was quarried to build parts of the Old and New Capitol buildings. The glaciers left some of the richest and easiest-to-farm soil to be found anywhere.

The town of North Liberty and parts of Penn and Madison Townships lies in an area of "drift" soil which was left when the tip of the Iowan glacier melted and the soil which it carried was finally dropped. Where this drift is, the soil is black, mellow and easily worked by farmers. The Southern part is a low plain and the Northern part is more hilly with loess on the surface. This soil which was deposited by wind is very light and easily dried out. Another type of soil in Johnson County is the blue clay of the Kansan glacier.

Large granite boulders were left here and there in the area. One of these boulders can be seen in the Alt-Belknap yard. Certain places, like Swan Lake were “kettle holes”, left by melting glaciers.



Most of the elevations in the area are between 600-800 feet above sea level. The Iowa River curiously leaves its easy course through dirt to cut deep ridges through rock, sometimes as deep as 100 feet. This rocky course is the big curve called the “big bend” or “north bend” of the river. In many places in the bend, the river cuts through Devonian limestone. Aside from the Iowa River, the area has only one other real source of drainage, called Pardieu Creek. It begins just northwest of North Liberty and drains into the Iowa River about two miles north of Coralville. Water in the area was easy to find by digging as little as 50 feet down in pioneer days. The Silurian Aquifer is where most of our water comes from today, and it is found about 300 feet below the surface. The water in the Silurian Aquifer comes all the way from Canada.

Most of the rock formations beneath the area are covered by as much as 300 feet of soil and loose drift. One place where the rock is at the surface is in the area where the Upper Devonian limestone was quarried in sections 5 and 8. The old quarries are about 1/2 mile in length. What made them special is that for some reason the layer was not a few feet thick as in many other places, but 40 feet thick. The stone was very strong, and “frostproof” which made it very, very good for building foundations of buildings because it wouldn’t crack and crumble when frozen. Some people think that it was a thick deposit because it was swept into big, deep piles by strong currents or waves.

At one point in the layers of rock, it seems to some geologists that the entire fish population died at once because the layer is crowded with fish teeth. Other layers are rich with the fossils of corals, molluscs, other sea life and sea plants. A special place to see some of these fossils is at the area of the Coralville Dam where rock was exposed by the floods of 1993.





Though I don't think the special rocks I found in the 1970's were originally from the area, their story is a part of Iowa's story (the official state rock) and also part of my story. When my daughter was little, we lived on a farm that was once owned by Olive and Floyd Myers. When cleaning up branches and weeds one day, I stumbled into a rock. I didn't want to leave it for the lawnmower to hit, so I dug it out. It turned out to be a perfect and large half of a geode. In digging out the first stone, I hit another, and another until I had dug up over 50 geodes of various sizes and quality.



For a person like myself, who loves rocks and geology, it was like a Christmas present. My daughter and I spent weeks with brushes and soapy water, cleaning up all those geodes. We dragged them with us through several moves, and I still have some of the nicest ones. Over the years, we gave many of the geodes to other rock lovers. The only explanation I could find for their presence in that spot was that they were collected by Floyd and Olive, and after they left that farm, someone who didn't care about them used them to fill up a hog wallow. Floyd and Olive also lived in a house on Front Street, two doors North of the Methodist Church. If you drive by that house, you can still see the remains of a rock garden in the yard.



# Local Quarries

The early settlers had many urgent needs to take care of. Their first homes were log, they didn't worry about sidewalks and driveways, and most of their water came from creeks or the river. Eventually they began to look for ways to make life easier and more permanent. They needed stone for many of these tasks. Stone lined the wells they dug, made walkways through the mud, served as foundation for basements and barns, and monuments for loved ones who died. Stone can be found in many places, but the stone quarried near North Liberty was of a special kind and in a very, very thick layer. A newspaper article titled "Stone For Both Old and Present State Capitols Obtained Near North Liberty" written by Mrs. J. C. Fuhrmeister stated that the limestone was "declared to be more valuable, more durable than any other known Devonian limestone in the northwest."

The State Quarry Stage of the Devonian limestone furnished building stone that was well known for being long lasting and easy to cut. Because it was "frostproof" and didn't crumble after being frozen and thawed, it was perfect for the foundations of buildings. It was so good that it was carted all the way from North Liberty to the state capitols; first to Iowa City, and later for the foundation stones at Des Moines.

In 1842, after the work on the capitol in Iowa City had progressed for three years, William Snyder and John M. Coleman thought the rock being used was inferior and found a new and better quarry about 10 miles north of Iowa City. The quarry was opened and transport began by boat and by wagon. Some of the earlier stone was replaced and all new stone came from the new quarry. The building of the old capital took fifteen years. The building of the new capitol at Des Moines was begun in 1873 and took over 12 years to finish. The principal quarry was owned by Nicholas Zeller Sr. and was first opened in 1849. The state leased the quarry in 1873 and Mr. Zeller donated the stone to the state for the benefit of having the quarry developed. Between 150 and 200 men were put to work for the next three years. The rocks were quarried by hand with drills and wedges, and with a hand operated derrick to move the stones. It took six men to carry a huge crowbar from one quarry to the other. Some of the stones were sledged down river on the winter ice.

Other pioneer settlers who owned land on the river also had small quarries such as George Wein, David Stewart, and Joseph Alt, Emerson, Elwood, and Jamerson.

Some of the stone blocks could not be used for the capitol because of the fossil fish teeth that were in them. Other uses for the quarry stones were for sidewalks, cemetery monuments, blocks for bridge piers, well linings, and curbstones for streets.

The sidewalk in front of the house where I live is limestone from the Stewart quarry. The stones were quarried and shaped for use as the sidewalk leading to the front door of the early Stewart house one mile east of North Liberty. I remember these stones from my childhood as being mostly covered by scrubby grass. When my folks could finally have a lawn that wasn't trampelled out by little kid feet, they removed the stones so the area would be smooth and could be mowed. When my husband and I built our house, we rescued the stones from a rock pile and used them for a sidewalk again. They have lasted all these years and travels with only one stone being broken.



The stones which form the foundation of the barn at the Stewart house were also from this quarry. There are other barns, and probably houses too that have locally quarried stone in their foundations. Many of the early wells had stone that lined their sides. Most of these wells are no longer used, and many have been filled in. There is one such filled in well to the north of the Stewart house just mentioned. The Stewart house later became the house I grew up in.



In 1900, a lawsuit went to the Supreme Court of Iowa over the rights to use a road that formerly had been used for traveling to the quarries. Though the lawsuit does not have much to do with our topic, having occurred after the quarries fell out of use. What is interesting, is the testimony by witnesses that also gives us insight into the quarries and who worked them and how the stone was transported. Some of the testimony follows:

William Russell, former resident of Penn Township--"*I was sometime ago acquainted with the road known as the state quarry road. I have known it about thirty years or a little over. I have traveled it. I traveled it for a year every working day in '73 and '74. I was hauling rock from the state quarries and it used to be a short road. I hauled this rock to Coralville; the state*

rock, they went to Des Moines to the capitol. There were seven teams. Sometimes Dr. Stewart's team...This gang that was hauling rock there hauled every working day that we could go out for a year or more. We used to make from eighteen to twenty days a month...The names of the men who hauled rock with me were Ben Moore, Baser, Charlie Carson, Pat Doyle and Cran Morris, Lee and myself, and Dr. Stewart's team I think came along in the fall of the year, and they stayed along in the winter. Yes, Sterritt he hauled some; very little. Bill Franklin's team hauled some in there too. These seven that I spoke of were steady teams. I don't recollect whether Henry Alt's team hauled. He might have been....That was in '73 or '74..

Question: Isn't it true that you didn't haul the loads of stone up that hill?

Answer: No sir.

Question: You went down empty?

Answer: Yes sir. When we had our stone we hauled around the other way, went from the quarry west and on down in by North Liberty...We used to have loads come up that hill seven teams to a load. Some times we would put on four horses."

John Madden, Clear Creek Township--"I can't tell you how often I did travel that. It was a great deal owing to the weather. Rainy days I didn't go so often. Sometimes I would go as high as six days in the week...He (Joe Winslow) boarded our hands while we got the stone for the bridge down there in '76...I guess it has been eight or ten years when I quit hauling through there. Then I hauled stone here to town...I hauled some for the city and some for the marble cutters. We generally went in that road and come out through the state quarries...I sold stone to (J.U.) Miller and to Sterling in IowaCity ten years ago...I brought them in bases and corner blocks and sockets for tombstones, and a few caps and cells."

Squire Owens, Penn Township--"...twenty or thirty years ago. I traveled it a great deal. I had twenty acres of timber close to Elwood's place, and I have had occasion to use a great many stone, and I hauled stone from the State Quarries and the Jamerson Quarry. I have hauled 150 loads of stone out of there I expect from three different places...I didn't just run the quarry. Elwood owned the quarry and he had some men working it, and I bought stone in one particular place, and I bought stone in other quarries and had an interest in working the State Quarries once with Mr. Bealer. That must have been twenty-five years ago...I don't think I hauled anything out of that place inside of the last ten years...When I spoke of having an interest in the state quarries that was long ago. That was in the early seventies, or rather before it. I built a barn in '70. I hauled the rock out of there about the time I was building the barn from the Elwood Quarry."

Laurin Owens, Penn Township about a mile and a quarter from the State quarries--"I used to be out there quite frequently some years ago...have hauled out probably one-hundred loads of stone. Traveled about '70 from that till '72 hauling stone."

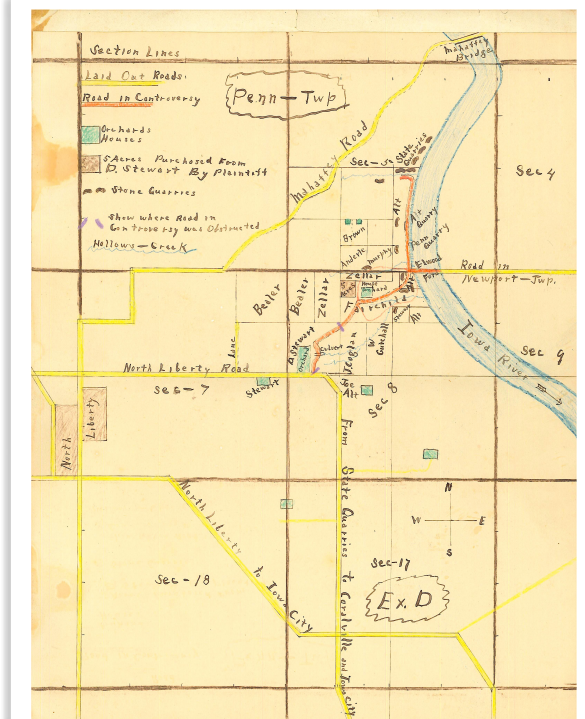


A.E. Alt, Penn Township, about 3/4 of a mile from Elwood Road--"*...I remember part of the stone that was hauled for father's (Joseph A. Alt) barn was hauled up south of the Elwood house. That was taken from father's quarry. A good share of the stone was got where Lentz works now and below that.*"

W. F. Murphy, Iowa City lawyer, formerly of Penn Township--"*There was a great many teams from Iowa City that hauled rock from the state quarry, and those teams going from Iowa City would go in that way and come out the other way. There were a great many people that lived in North Liberty and some of the farmers that hauled rock from the state quarry...I hauled rock out of there...*"

Isaac Meyers, Penn Township--"*In 1895 and 1896 I hauled a good many rock from what we call the Stewart quarry. I believe they call it the Scales road. I bought the rock from Brown...I never hauled any stone from the Elwood quarry. I guess I have seen it. I don't know. There is so many quarries there...In hauling from these quarries all the stone I have seen hauled came through Liberty up by what they call the schoolhouse road. I hauled rock over the Scales road..*"

Bert Eastland, Penn Township--*I used to work in the Penn quarry; commenced in 1873. I was quarrying stone for the state. I didn't do any hauling at that time. I know the way they hauled. From the state quarry they hauled up to where the school house is now. They came to the quarry in across from Stewart's. Stewart's road didn't go through any field. It went through the Zeller timber...I used to work in the Jamerson Quarry...I was working for the state at Des Moines prior to the time I came here I believe I worked for Henry Alt when he had charge of the stone company's land. When teams would come there and I was working there I would see that they got their loads filled. I traveled the road in '73. I hired out in Des Moines to the state and they shipped me to Iowa City...I said I fixed that road from down in the hollow where I got curb stone out clear out to the North Liberty road in 1881. I got the curb stone right down north of the Elwood house on what is called the state quarry land and hauled them out that way.*





## Cemeteries

**Alt Cemetery**-section 17--First burial was a child of CB Wray

**Ridgewood Cemetery**-section 1--1850-first burial was Mary Lininger

**Hemphill Cemetery**-no longer able to locate

**Clark Cemetery**-only one person left there, others moved to Oak Hill

**Oak Hill** - though in Penn Township, is taken care of by City of Coralville

At Ridgewood Cemetery, there are a number of distinct sections, with rumors about the oldest part. The sections began with the David Wray family, who with some other families, began a burial place for certain families. An addition was made by David W. Wray. There is also an area called the Hitching Grounds, and there are the Penn additions. The oldest burials are in the Hawk Cemetery, also known as the Madison section. It is in this section that rumors abound. Several burials made there during recent times were difficult because the grave digger reportedly was running into bones. I haven't been able to verify this, but there are several possible reasons why this might happen. First, early grave markers were sometimes made out of wood, as were the caskets. Over time, both might have disintegrated and disappeared. Another explanation might be that it was a burial ground for the Sac, Fox or Ioway Indians who once lived in the area. At any rate, no burials are allowed in this section anymore. The township trustees recently platted a new, unused area of the cemetery so that there is plenty of room for those who need to be buried.

Following are some important dates in the development of the cemetery area.

December 31, **1918**--A.S. Bane chair, resolutions adopted for new ground recently purchased from D. F. Denison.

September 8, **1919**--Special meeting called to meet with D.W. Wray to discuss his giving his part of the cemetery to the township.

February 21, **1921**--R.H. Alt & family gave deed and public road access to Alt Cemetery to township.

September 30, **1942**--Trustees met with John Crozier to acquire an acre of land (wedge near the road) this is the area that was recently platted for use.

In recent years, the trustees of Penn Township have joined with the City of North Liberty to provide better funding and care for the cemeteries. The current members of the Joint Cemetery Board are: Don Koss, Gordon Rath, Grace Young, Brenda Knapp, John Kane, and Frank E. Colony. Frank has been on the board for many years. During part of his years on the board and long before, Joe Alt (my dad) put in over 50 years of service to the township.

Near the early homestead of Joseph A. Alt Sr., there were burial mounds left by people of native origin. Though some were ready to dig into them out of curiosity or scientific interest, this early pioneer felt they should be treated with respect and not disturbed.

The first recorded burials in Penn Township were made at the "Alt" Cemetery a few hundred yards from modern North Liberty Road NE. The Alts' came to the area in 1839 with their mother who had remarried a man named Wein. The cemetery was called the Wein Cemetery in early records, but since has come to be known as the Alt Cemetery.

There are many interesting things to learn by looking around in cemeteries and at tombstones:

- You can see which families were related to each other such as Alt and Stewart. (Each "plot" at Ridgewood Cemetery is marked with cement posts at each corner. A "plot" consists of eight to ten individual "lots.")
- You can see which families might have suffered from epidemics since several died around the same time, for example Lehman; Mary died Oct 4, 1860, Orrin died September 24, 1860, and William died October 2, 1860. They were the children of Samuel Lehman who died September 20, 1860. (Babies were often not named on tombstones, but labeled as "Infant.")
- Often you can tell who was in the military or who belonged to groups such as the Masons.
- You can see which families favored large monuments and made plantings of flowers and bushes which bloom each year.
- Each time period also had fads in tombstone carving. Some stones look like tree trunks, others are giant balls. Some early graves have a stone at the "head" with carving on it and a smaller one to mark the "foot."

At the present time (1996) the author of this history (that's me, Joan Alt Belknap) is the clerk of Penn Township. I have the records for the cemeteries in the area. (retired now)

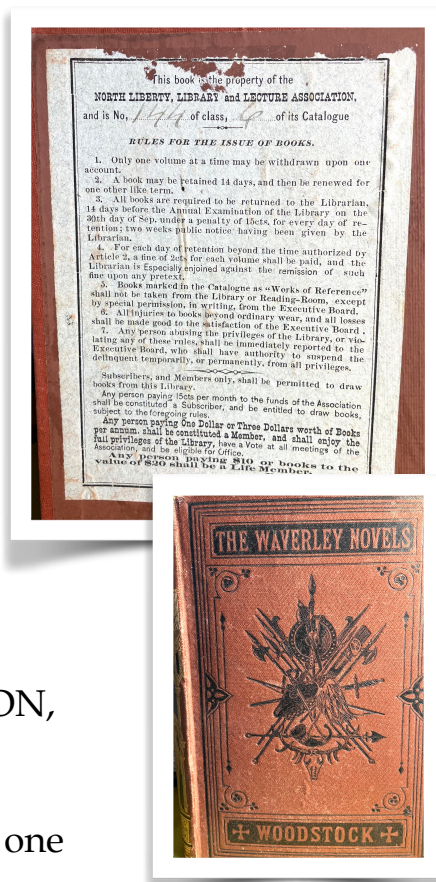
# Libraries

Many people think that North Liberty had no library until a group of ambitious volunteers created the present library within the last 20 years. That is not true.

While I don't have very many details about its operation, I do have proof that a library existed. It may not have been a building as we know it, but my family owns several books which have a plate inside stating that it was the property of the **North Liberty Library and Lecture Association**. Nearby, you can see a picture of the title page and the plate from one of the books. Since it might be hard to read the print, I have written what it says below.

This book is the property of the  
NORTH LIBERTY, LIBRARY and LECTURE ASSOCIATION,  
and is No, 144 of class, 6 of its Catalogue  
RULES FOR THE ISSUE OF BOOKS.

1. Only one volume at a time may be withdrawn upon one account.
2. A book may be retained 14 days, and then be renewed for one other like term.
3. All books are required to be returned to the Librarian, 14 days before the Annual Examination of the Library on the 30th day of Sep. under a penalty of 15cts. for every day of retention; two weeks public notice having been given by the Librarian.
4. For each day of retention beyond the time authorized by Article 2, a fine of 2cts. for each volume shall be paid, and the Librarian is Especially enjoined against the remission of such fine upon any pretext.
5. Books marked in the Catalogue as "Works of Reference" shall not be taken from the Library or Reading-Room, except by special permission, in writing, from the Executive Board.
6. All injuries to books beyond ordinary wear, and all losses shall be made good to the satisfaction of the Executive Board.



7. Any person abusing the privileges of the Library, or violating any of these rules, shall be immediately reported to the Executive Board, who shall have authority to suspend the delinquent temporarily, or permanently, from all privileges.

Subscribers, and Members only, shall be permitted to draw books from this Library. Any person paying 15cts per month to the funds of the Association shall be constituted a Subscriber, and be entitled to draw books, subject to the foregoing rules. Any person paying One Dollar or Three Dollars worth of Books per annum, shall be constituted a Member, and shall enjoy the full privileges of the Library, have a vote at all meetings of the Association, and be eligible for Office.

Any person paying \$10 or books to the value of \$20 shall be a Life Member.  
Price\$\_\_\_\_\_

The book which this plate was in was one of the Waverly Novels by Sir Walter Scott titled Woodstock: or, The Cavalier. A Tale of the Year Sixteen Hundred and Fifty-One and was published in 1876. Another book from the library collection was titled Round the World: A Series of Letters and it was published in 1870. I suppose that when the library was closed, my family bought the books at a sale.

In my Grandmother's diary for the years 1888 and 1889 (she was 20 years old at the time) she mentioned going up to "Literary" on Saturday nights. I wonder if this was part of the program of the library and "lecture" association.

She also noted in her diary when she finished each book she read. During these two years, she read the following novels; Oliver Cromwell, Edith Lyle, Ivanhoe, Peveril of the Peak, Walt Wheeler Scout Detective, Children of the Abbey, Kidnapped and Thaddeus of Warsaw. While her family had a large number of books on their personal bookshelves, none of these titles is among those handed down.

In the September 25, 1888 entry in Grandma's diary, she wrote this; "*Frank Carol and Mert Stinger were here yesterday. Frank is a book agent.*" This was one of the ways that people were able to buy books. Other books owned by the family were bought at "Ceach & Allyn, Books and Tomes, Iowa City", "bought of Milo Hagins", "Wieneke's Arcade Book Store, Iowa City", "University Book Store" and "One Price Cash Book Store, P.O. Block, Allin & Wilson Co." There are also two books printed in the area, one by Republican Steam Printing House and Bindery, Iowa City, and the other by Daily Republican Printing and Binding House, Cedar Rapids.

When I was little in the 1950's, there was no library closer than Iowa City. I remember going to the Iowa City Public Library where I didn't know how to find anything except the books which I knew were stored in the round wooden case which you could sit on top of. I remember Miss Westgate. She always reminded me of Mary Poppins, ready to do something zany at any moment. The books I remember are Harold and the Purple Crayon, Blueberries for Sal, Make Way for Ducklings, and the stories of Flicka, Ricka and Dicka.

Our school had a very small and tattered collection of books which belonged to the district. They were rotated a few times a year.

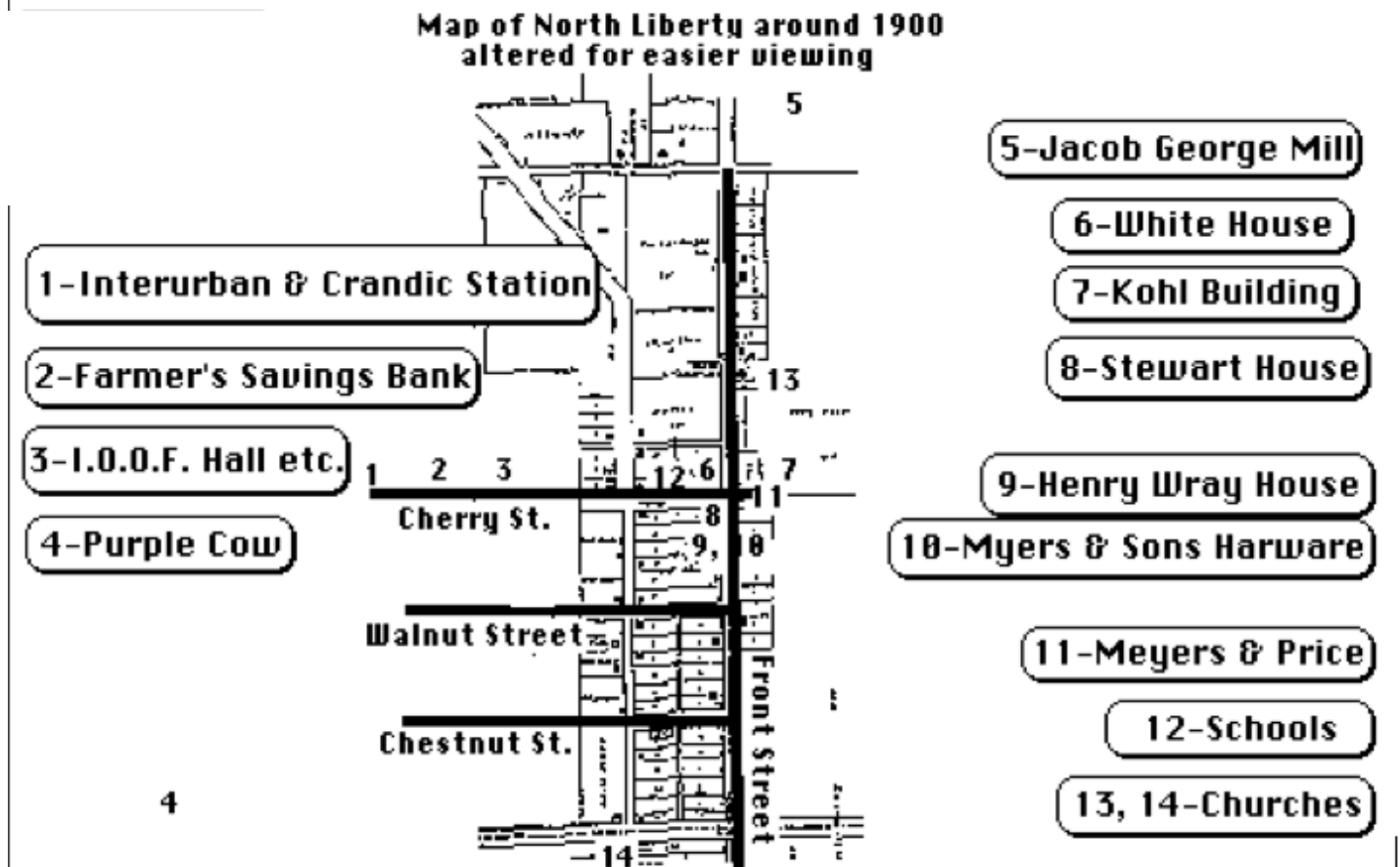
Many people had small libraries of their own. Since there were teachers in my family, there was a ready supply of old textbooks, filled with mythology and fairy tales. I read them over and over, never getting tired of them. I also read many stories from the old Book of Knowledge encyclopedias which were on our bookshelves. Hurlbut's Story of the Bible for Young and Old is a title I read often.

A family library I remember very well was that of Lena and Gale Gritton, our neighbors. When we used to visit there, there were no children my age and I often drifted over to look at story books. There were two of them I still remember. They were small "Little Golden Books." One was Noah's Ark and the other was Johnny Appleseed. I read them until I knew them by heart. Perhaps I liked Johnny Appleseed so well because my Great-Grandfather brought some of the first apple seeds into the area. On a trip to Davenport to buy supplies, he brought back some apples. As they were eating them, they saved the seeds and planted them. He ended up with a fine orchard which was mentioned several times in the newspaper.

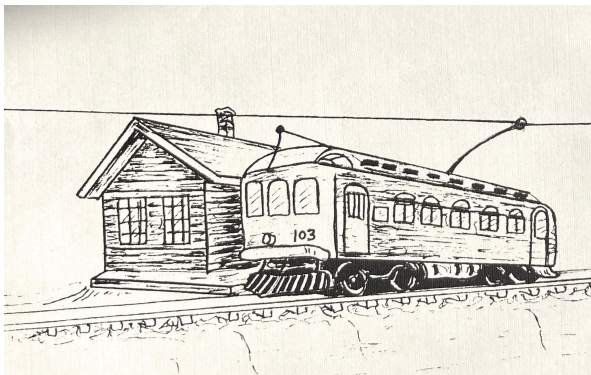
In addition to books, many people read newspapers and magazines which they received in the mail. Some of the magazines my grandparents read were "Ladies Home Companion," "Good Housekeeping," "Youth Companion," and the "Ladies Repository." The newspapers most often read by my family were "The Republican" and later the "Press Citizen" and the "Gazette." My aunt, Hazel Bowman, sold subscriptions to the Press and won a contest in which the prize was a car. Though she never drove, it was a long remembered event in her life.

I haven't mentioned the library that exists in North Liberty now. I think I will leave that up to you to add. I will tell you that when the library was in the same building as the city offices, it was on the same spot where my great-great grandfather, Robert Stewart built his home in 1865.

# Historic Locations Map



On the following pages, you will find information about the numbered locations on the map starting with the Interurban.





# The Interurban

The Interurban was an electric car propelled by an electric high line suspended by poles above the tracks. A trolley pole on top of the car transferred the electricity to the car motor. Because the electric lines to run the Interurban were in place, the residents of North Liberty were able to get electricity in their homes sooner than they might have otherwise.

The **Interurban** got its name because it was the means of transportation between two **urban** communities, **Cedar Rapids and Iowa City**. It was later called the **CRandIC** Line.

The system started operating on August 13th, 1904. The trains operated on an hourly schedule. Stops from the Iowa River North were: Curtis, Mid-River, Youngs, North Liberty, Rosebarry, Stewart, Oakdale, Grove, Coralville, Black Springs, Iowa City and Chitauqua Heights.

Country people were afforded a new life style, and many people in the area found employment with the Interurban. Around the time it began, many people did not have cars. During World War II rationing times, many people used the Interurban because though they had cars, they could not get gas for them.

At North Liberty, many high school students used the Interurban as a means of transportation to schools in Iowa City. Tickets for thirty days could be bought for \$9.00. These tickets allowed the holder to ride for a period of one month, as many times as needed, on this "school kids" car.

Many farmers in the area sent cans filled with milk to Sidwell's in Iowa City.

On football Saturdays double-headers (two cars hooked together) were used to carry fans to the Iowa Hawkeye football games. One year a storm made roads so bad, many cars got stuck in the mud and the Interurban had to make a special run to carry people back to Cedar Rapids.

After the road was paved between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, business fell off. The Interurban ride was not as smooth and convenient as driving in a car. On May 30th, 1953, after 49 year of operation, Interurban cars made their final run.

# Read About the Street Lights

Dr. Stewart, Chairman Citizen's Committee  
North Liberty, Iowa

Dear Sir:

We propose to supply current from our railway circuit at North Liberty for the purpose of lighting the streets of North Liberty, at 10 cents per K.W. Hour, measured by a meter to be furnished and installed by us. You to provide all necessary pole line material, lamps, brackets, etc., also switch at point where the current is taken from our line, said switch to be under your control and to be operated by you. You to assume all risks and pay all damages to persons or property, caused by the construction, installation, maintenance and operation of said pole line, lamps, and all other appliances used for the transmission of current to be furnished under this proposal, and all damages of every nature whatsoever caused by said current to be furnished under this proposal.

Our estimate of this current to you is approximately as follows: Ten 16 c.p. lamps, burning 3 hours per night, would be 60 K.W. Hours per month, which, at 10 cents per K.W. Hour would be \$6.00 per month. Lamps must be burned in series, five lights on each circuit. This price does not include lamp renewals.

We will furnish you the necessary wire (size #8) at 17 cents per lb. The wire needed for this job would be about 222 lbs. at 17 c or \$37.74. The swan-neck brackets would cost about \$2.45 each, including socket and reflector. (Cutter's Eastern Street hood) The lamps would cost you 20 cents each, so that the wire, brackets, sockets, and lamps would cost you approximately \$64.24.

Hoping that this is satisfactory to you, we are  
Yours truly,

Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway & Light Co.  
per Thomas Sloss, Supt.



# The CRANDIC

Freight service was another very important legacy the Interurban gave to North Liberty. Because the track was laid for the Interurban passenger service,

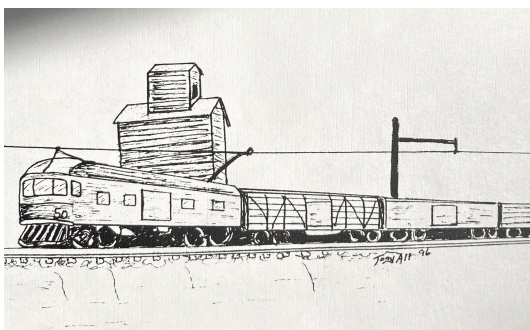
it could also be used to carry loads of livestock, grain, milk, mail and other things.

An elevator was built to handle the farmers' grain. You can see it in the background of the picture. Many cars of grain were shipped from North Liberty. The elevator was operated by Jess Wray.

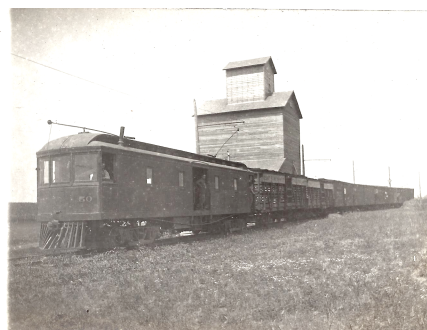
Stock yards were established and farmers shipped many car loads of livestock to market. You can see a bill from one sale below. Some livestock went to Iowa City and Stoner and Albright bought hogs from the farmers and shipped them to the packing plant in Cedar Rapids.

A lumber yard was built, and carloads of lumber and coal came in. Coal was the main source of fuel for the area. Carloads of coal were shipped in and distributed by wagon to the customers of the area. Jess Green was the operator of the lumber yard.

As you look at the picture, notice the trolley poles on top of the freight engine. Electricity was transmitted through them from the high tension wire to the motor of the engine. As time went on, the high tension wires were dismantled. The tracks are now used by diesel engine pulled freight service.



*Freight train with the train.  
North Liberty elevator. 1/11/10*



This is a shipping bill for 73 hogs which were shipped from North Liberty to Iowa City in the 1930's by R. H. Alt (my Grandpa). After shipping expenses, R.H. received a check for \$1,016.17.

The total weight of the 73 hogs was 19,290 pounds. One hog weighed 448 pounds and brought a price of 4.75 for every hundred pounds. Two other sows were "thin" and brought only 4.00 per hundred pounds. One buyer bought 63 hogs and paid 5.90 per hundred weight. The hogs weighed 16,860 pounds. How much did he pay?

No.	Weight	Price	Total
1	448	4.75	21.28
2	448	4.75	21.28
3	448	4.75	21.28
4	448	4.75	21.28
5	448	4.75	21.28
6	448	4.75	21.28
7	448	4.75	21.28
8	448	4.75	21.28
9	448	4.75	21.28
10	448	4.75	21.28
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72	448	4.75	21.28
73	448	4.75	21.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,290</b>	<b>5.90</b>	<b>1,135.81</b>
<b>Less</b>	<b>1,118.64</b>		
<b>Balance</b>			<b>17.17</b>

# The Mehaffey Brothers

If the name Mehaffey sounds familiar to you, it is probably because it is the name of the bridge that crosses the Coralville Reservoir on the road to Solon. Although I looked in all the local history books I could find for information about how the bridge got its name, I can only guess that it was named for the Mehaffey's who owned land on the other side of the river in Big Grove Township. The Mehaffey Bridge was built in 1896 at a cost of \$5,467.05.

You may be wondering how the Mehaffey family is related to the Crandic railroad. In 1948, the Cedar Rapids Gazette featured a "Foto Facts" column by John Reynolds which featured three Mehaffey Brothers who all worked for the Crandic railroad. In 1948 Jim, Bill, and Emmett Mehaffey had accumulated a total of 100 years of service in Crandic employment. Jim became the station agent at North Liberty (and also postmaster). Bill became the Crandic shop storekeeper in Cedar Rapids (and earned the distinction of working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for a whole year during World War I shortages). Youngest brother Emmett spent most of his time as freight operator at Iowa City. All of the brothers worked at a variety of jobs with Crandic during their careers.

The three boys were the sons of Robert Carson Mehaffey and his wife Mary Doyle Mehaffey (the daughter of Michael and Mary Ellen Doyle). I couldn't find any information about Mr. Mehaffey, but his wife Mary was well known, having been a school teacher and later assistant postmistress. Their other children were John, Sr. Mary Cordelia, Mrs. Alex Kern and Mrs. Herbert (Geraldine) Owen.

The Mehaffey's were married in 1892. In the 1900 atlas showing Penn Township, an Ellen Doyle owned land near Mehaffey Bridge. It seems likely that Robert and Mary met because they lived across the river from each other. I have not found any support for this romantic theory yet.

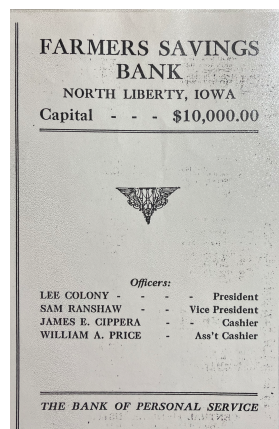
One other conclusion that I haven't been able to prove is that Mary's family also owned the land which included "Doyle Hill" at some time. As a child in the 1950's, it was a great annual treat to go to Doyle Hill on a sledding trip. At the time, Doyle Hill was open pasture and when it was covered with snow, it seemed like a huge mountain to us. Though the trip down the hill went by in a few thrilling seconds, the trip back up took forever. It seems like we only were able to make 4 or 5 trips down and back before we were completely worn out and it was time to go home. The hillside is now pretty much overgrown with bushes and trees.



A view of Doyle Hill from North Liberty Road  
(looking north you can see the hill that is east of the current location of South Slope)

## Farmer's Savings Bank Robbery!!

The Farmer's Saving's Bank was organized in 1913. The building is a small brick building near the railroad tracks. The ad which you see at the right is from a book called *How To Do Things*. It was published by *The Farm Journal* magazine in 1919 and included a list of the residents of Johnson County, along with ads such as this one.



The *Iowa City Press Citizen* reported a robbery at the Farmer's Savings Bank. It is not clear what day the robbery occurred on, but the article appeared on Saturday, July 17, 1915. James Cippera, the cashier was on duty and thought the request for money was a joke until the two robbers forced him against the wall at gunpoint. They left him tied hands and feet, and gagged with two kerchiefs.

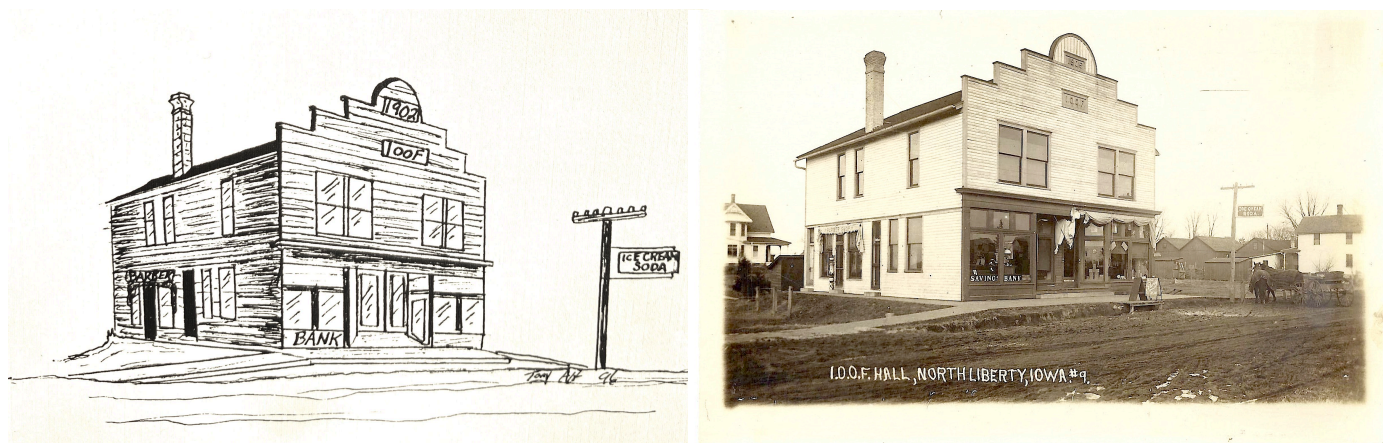
Apparently the robbers parked their Ford car about a block and a half from Kohl's garage. They asked at the garage for 5 gallons of gas. They fled in their car, chased by Mr. Cippera who had gotten loose, and "practically all of the Iowa City Police." They disappeared on foot into the weeds by the Iowa River near the quarry (which was close to City Park). They couldn't be found at that time, and I don't know yet if they were ever caught.

Luckily the bank carried burglary insurance and the stockholders and customers did not suffer at the time.

Today the building is the office of lawyer Philip MacTaggart. Mr. MacTaggart says there is a large burn mark on the floor in the shape of a hand. He does not know how it got there.







## The I.O.O.F. Hall

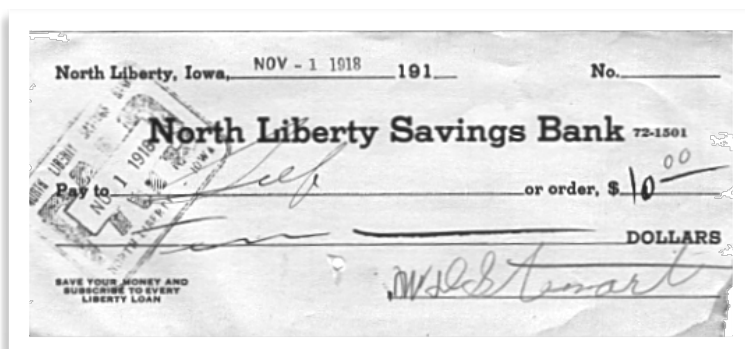
The I.O.O.F. building was located at the corner of Cherry and George Street. It was built by the Odd Fellows Lodge in 1903. I.O.O.F. stands for International Order of Odd Fellows.

The upper part was used for Lodge purposes.

On the right hand (east) side of the lower part of the building, Edgar Shinn operated a drug store and an ice cream parlor. Later Koser's Grocery Store occupied this area before moving to their final location.

The North Liberty Savings Bank was in the lower left hand corner. It began business in 1904 with R.H. Wray as president. By 1912, it had deposits amounting to \$60,000. In the early 30's the bank closed. After the closing, the cashier of the bank, Samuel Lehen was struck by a bolt of lightning and killed north of town.

This is a cancelled check from the account of R. H. Alt (my grandfather) which he had at the North Liberty Savings Bank. It was written in 1907. My father was one month and 3 days old when this check was written.



In back of the bank facing George Street was June Oliver's barber shop.

In later years the Masonic White Marble Lodge No. 238 A.F. and A.M. bought the building. After the Masonic Lodge moved to Iowa City, the building was sold to Penn Township.

Penn Township used it as a place for trustees to have meetings and a place to hold elections. The elections were conducted by the Penn Township board of trustees. Voting was done by the voter marking an x in the square for the candidate. A counting board consisting of three judges and two clerks counted the voted ballots. Sometimes the counting lasted into the next day. It was also used as a community hall.

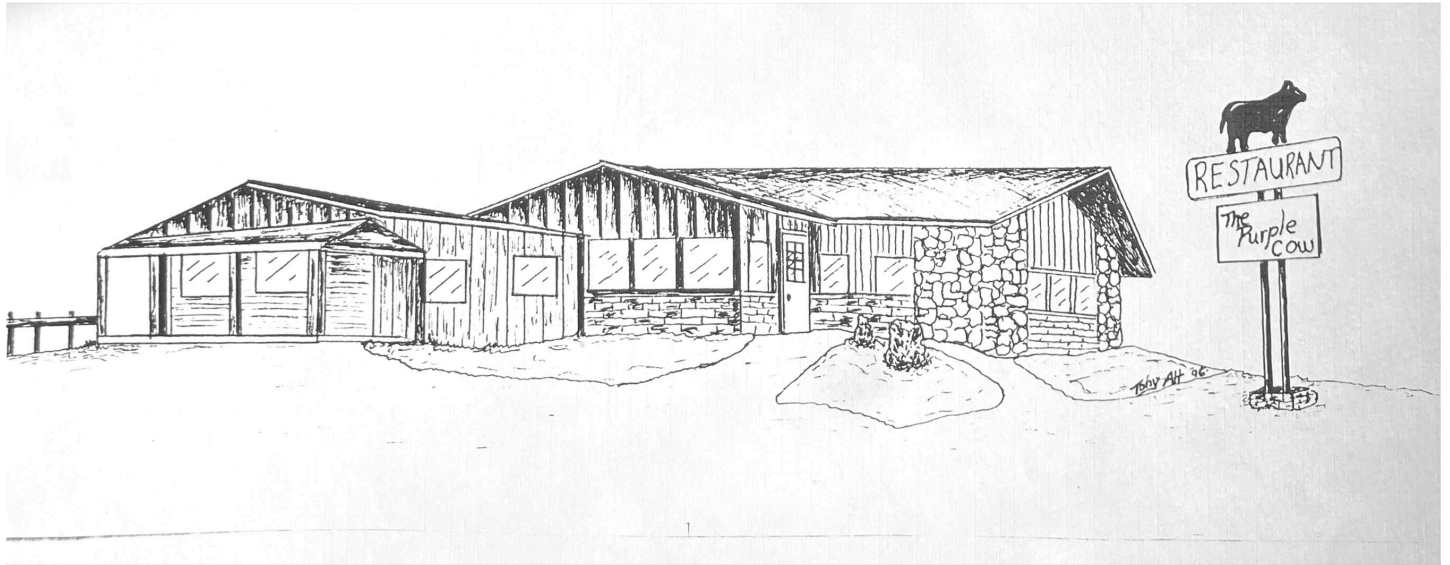
The North Liberty City Council had the building condemned for safety reasons. It was sold to be demolished. A great deal of lumber was salvaged.

In this spot today, there is a house that was moved from somewhere else. I think it may have once been a school.





# The Purple Cow



The Purple Cow Restaurant and Ice Cream Store is not an old building like many of the others. This building was built in 1972. I have included it because it illustrates the fact that people today can work very hard like the pioneers did and become very successful.

Lloyd and Norma Griffith Myers and their children Marianna, Mike, John and Janet, operated a dairy farm. Norma tells me that farmers were paid low prices for their milk

by big companies, but then customers had to pay high prices to buy it once it reached the grocery store. People started to buy milk directly from the Myers farm and one particular spring the roads were so bad they often got stuck in the mud on their way to buy milk. The Myers' decided to make a leap of faith and open a business in town where they could sell the milk directly to the customers. They felt that they had to be able to get a better price dealing directly with the customer than going through someone else, and the customers would benefit too.

Their first store opened in Coralville in April of 1960. At first they sold milk from their own farm, soft-serve ice cream, and Bar-B-Que sandwiches. Eventually they became busy enough that they no longer could keep up with both the store and the dairy production so they sold their dairy herd. They added more items to the menu at the store and opened a miniature golf course there.

Twelve years later they built and opened their new and bigger business in North Liberty which you see here. Norma tells me that Lloyd, with an eye to the future, thought the building might become another business someday, so he made sure it was built very sturdy-sturdy enough for cars to drive on if it became a new car showroom. Eventually they wanted to slow down the pace of their lives and they sold the business. In case this building looks familiar, it is now the home of Hills Bank and Trust. Lloyd's thoughtful idea paid off for the bank, since a heavy bank vault needs a very sturdy building to hold it.

The original Purple Cow in Coralville was located next to the present Coral Fruit Market. Their cones were 10 cents and you could buy a hamburger and chips for 65 cents. Norma recalls that she worried terribly when they raised their prices for the first time, sure that they would lose all their business.

In true pioneer spirit, the Myers family took a chance and worked hard. They turned what might have been a personal disaster into a huge success.

## Jacob George Sorghum Mill

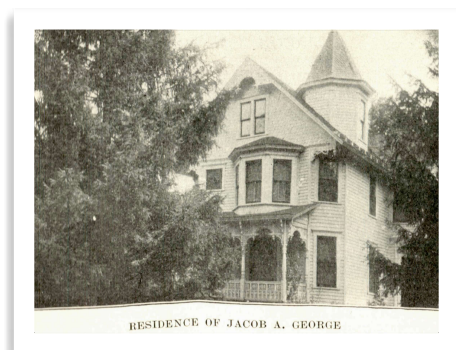
Though it is nearly hidden now behind new duplexes, the house of Jacob George is still being lived in. The barn collapsed and was removed and the house is being renovated. It once was the showplace of North Liberty, and the site of a busy sorghum mill.

Martin George, a blacksmith and farmer came to Iowa in 1846 from Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. In 1848 his son Jacob was born and the family soon moved to North Liberty. Jacob became a surveyor and also a farmer. In 1877 he was married to Martha Zeller who was the daughter of another early pioneer. They had three daughters, Grace, Cadence (Ham) and Martha.

Jacob George and J.F. Price bought a steam driven mill from L.W. Chamberlin. With it they sawed lumber, milled cane, and ground feed. Grace George (in a *Press Citizen* article titled "*Memories of Sorghum Mill Survive on George Farm*") recalled that her father took the barrels of sorghum to Cedar Rapids where he sold them for \$1 each. He took four at a time in a wagon pulled by horses. He began to make molasses just after his marriage and continued to do until he sold the mill just before World War I. The sorghum mill was sold to the Bowersox family of Shueyville. It was still in operating condition in the early 1960's. Of course I am not old enough to remember molasses from the George mill, but every fall our family would drive up to Shueyville to buy molasses from the Bowersox family. We used to buy it in a silver bucket which was probably about a gallon. It tasted best used as syrup on fried mush.

In 1892, he built the house which still stands. It had ten rooms, metal ceilings, a circular staircase and stained glass windows. He also planted many trees and built his fences with concrete fence posts. When the Handley family lived there later, I sometimes babysat for their daughter Gail Ann. I was afraid to go upstairs because there were bats up there.

Grace was the last George to live on the home place and she died in 1966.





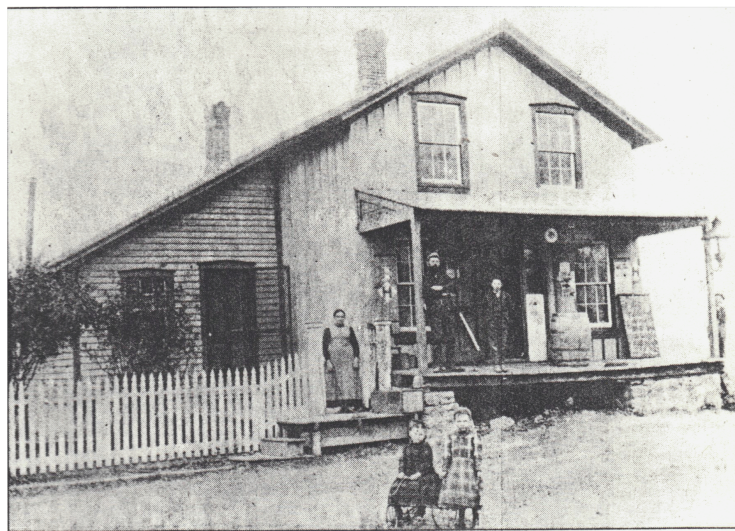
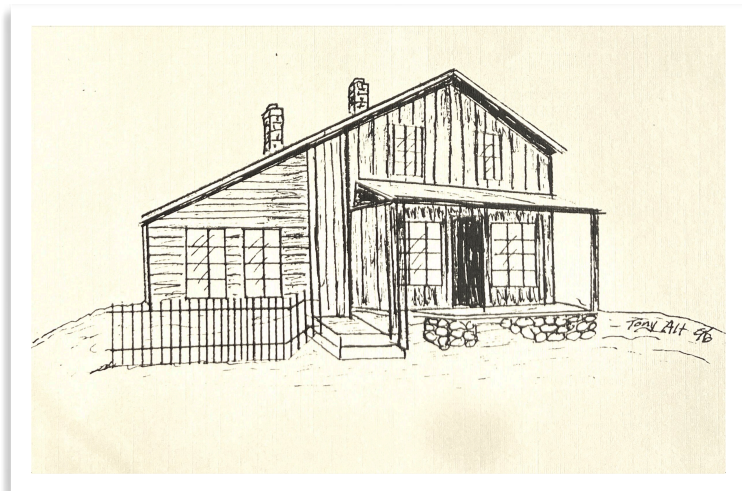
## The White House

This picture shows the White house before the front porch was removed when Cherry Street was widened. The building looks much the same today as it did in the past. It is located on the corner of Cherry and Front Streets, with the front door facing Cherry Street. It has been placed on the National Register of Historical Places by the Iowa State Historical Society. It was built by Harry A. White in 1876.

Mr. White was born in 1847 in Bedford Pennsylvania. He married Elizabeth Alloway in 1868. They settled in North Liberty in 1875. The White's had one daughter, Jessie, who married Dale Anderson.

Harry White was a jack-of-all-trades. He was a carpenter, meat cutter, shoe maker, store keeper, postmaster, and more. He ran a grocery store in his house. In addition to letting customers come to the store, he also had a "huckster wagon" which was like a rolling grocery store that drove around the countryside to those who lived some distance away. The wagon, which was pulled by horses, went as far as Tiffin and Oxford. At least one of the drivers was A.S. Bane who sold cream, eggs, flour, sugar and pans to country folks. (A.S. was known to most people as Bert and one of Bert's uncles was Dr. Stewart).

In 1877 Mr. White became Postmaster. In 1882 he became a Notary Public. His wife Elizabeth had a "laying out" board, and helped prepare bodies for burial. Just before the funeral, the hearse would come from Iowa City and pick up the body and take it to the church or the graveyard.



In 1890, Harry White and his wife, Elizabeth, gathered their family for this portrait on the porch of the store.

One corner of the house was also the office and home of Dr. James Von Stein.

The first telephone was in the White house, and they also had the first gramophone.

You can see how important a "General Store" was for the community, and the White's provided many useful services for the people. Without our convenient ways of spreading news, many people went to the store just to hear the latest news and visit with their friends and neighbors.

The house was lived in by the family for many years (Jessie Anderson, and her daughter Delma Dever both lived there) but later was used by local businesses as an office. Lawyer Phil MacTaggart had his office there before moving to the old bank building. The old store is now used as the offices of McCoy Construction.

If you would like to read more about the White family, see [Irving Weber's Iowa City vol. 5](#), pages 13-16.

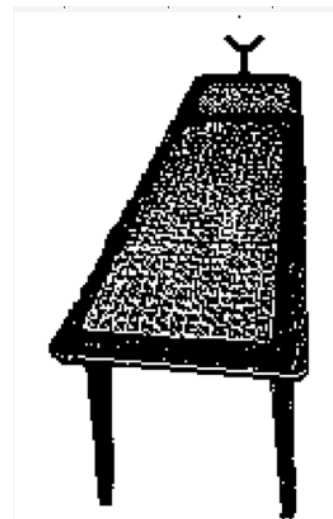


## Early Funerals

There weren't really many funeral homes as we know them today. Because of the problem of getting around slowly, most people took care of their own deceased family members or used the services of someone like Mrs. Harry A. White.

She used a bench like the one at the left to lay the body on. It was called a "laying out board" and was about six feet long and eighteen inches wide with panels of woven cane in the center.

Mrs. White cared for the body in such ways as placing pennies on the eyes to keep them closed (muscles and tendons cause movement after death by shrinking or relaxing) or putting a cloth soaked with solution (provided by a professional undertaker) on the face to keep it from turning an unnatural color.



Just before the funeral service, the undertaker would arrive and transfer the body to the casket. (Irving Weber's Iowa City vol.5)

Some families would "lay the body out" at their own homes. Sometimes they would have a room which was used for special needs like the birth of a child, or for someone sick or dead. Perhaps it was so the "often unpleasant memories" wouldn't be associated with the rooms they lived in each day. If you are interested in rooms like this, read The Borning Room by Fleishman.

Many early settlers were buried in home made wooden boxes, and were not "preserved" by embalming as we do today.

Some families had their own small cemeteries, such as the Alt cemetery. Other people used cemeteries which were privately "operated" like the Wray cemetery. It is likely that some early burials were made in places which are not known or marked today.



# The Kohl Building

The Kohl's Garage Building is easy to recognize today. Though it has gone through some changes, on the outside part of it looks a lot like it did when it was built. Today it is the North Liberty Flower Shop building.

The Garage was built facing Front Street in 1917. When the highway (Dubuque Street now) was paved the entrance was changed to the east end. It is built from hollow tiles. The lower floor was used by various operators as a place to repair automobiles. The upper floor was a dance hall and a place to play basketball.

A building was built between the garage and store. Charlie Ohl had a restaurant there. Later it was used as a barber shop (men only). Certain men would always get shaved by a barber. The barber would make a lather with soap in a shaving mug using a brush. The shaving was done with a sharp straight-edged razor.

A fire apparatus was also housed here. It consisted of a cart with ladders and a lot of buckets hanging on it.

In 1949 the Post Office was moved to the eastern part of the building on the lower floor. It remained there until the new Post Office was built in 1973.

Dave and Rita Roberts bought the building on September 7, 1976 from the Streb Brothers. Extensive remodeling was done to the outside and inside. Apartments were made on the upper floor. The North Liberty Flower Shop is in the lower floor.



Julius Kohl, who built it, was born in Germany in 1858. He emigrated to America in 1881. When he arrived, he couldn't speak English and the only work he knew was that of a miller. He worked very hard and eventually accumulated much land and later several fine houses and a business. In addition to learning English, he was handicapped by a horse and buggy accident in which he lost his right arm. He was a very successful businessman. He was influential in securing the incorporation of North Liberty and was the town's first mayor or alderman.

# The Stewart House



This house was known as the Stewart house, and was built by Robert Stewart after the Civil War. It stood facing Front Street on the corner of Cherry Street. The city offices and the library are built on the spot where this house stood.

Robert Stewart was born in 1798 in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. He was the owner of a large woolen mill in Jackson Township, Huntingdon County, which he sold in 1854. His wife was Anne Thomas MacDonald.

They moved to North Liberty on November 16, 1865, and bought lots 5-9 in Block 3 from Martin George for \$600.

In January 1866, Robert Stewart was appointed by U.S. Postmaster General William Dennison to be Postmaster at North Liberty. The Post Office was in the lower Northeast wing of his house.

Three of their children lived in Penn Township. They were Dr. David Stewart, Nancy Stewart Bane (wife of James Bane) and John T. Stewart. Robert died in 1880 and was buried in Ridgewood Cemetery in Penn Township.

After his father's death, Dr. David Stewart lived in the house with his wife, Winifred Duff Stewart, and carried on his medical practice in several rooms in the house. He was also a surgeon in the Civil War. He was a member of the Iowa legislature in 1869. He lived in the house until his own death in 1910.

One of their daughters, also named Winifred, then cared for her mother and the house. Miss Stewart was an elementary teacher, who taught school in the area and in North Liberty for 50 years. In the original picture from which this drawing was made, Winifred is the person standing in front of the house.

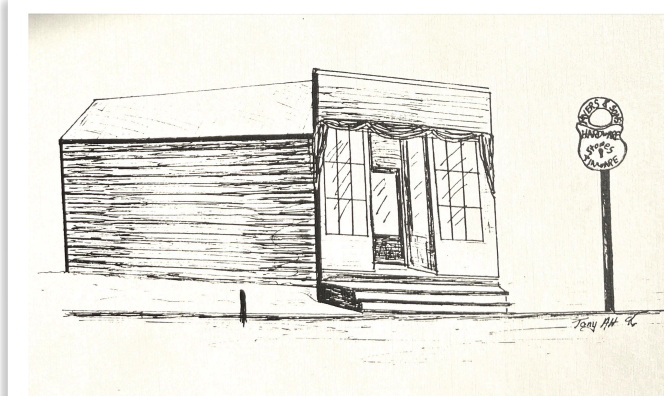
As you look at the far left of the house, you see one single room sticking on the end of the house. This was called a summer kitchen. In the days before they had microwaves and air conditioning, they tried to keep the rest of the house as cool as possible. One way that helped was to have a kitchen off by itself so that when it got hot from cooking, the heat didn't spread to the rest of the house. They not only did the cooking for daily meals, but they spent hour after hour canning fruits and vegetables to eat during the winter months. They had to boil the jars that contained the food so that the germs were killed and the jar was hot enough to seal. Try to think of how many cans and boxes of food your family eats in one winter, and then imagine that YOU are the one who has to grow the plants, pick the food, wash and get it ready to can, and then spend hours in a hot kitchen sealing all the jars.

The City of North Liberty purchased the property in 1972. The house was burned down by the Fire Department to give the firemen practice fighting fires and in 1975, the Fire Station and City Hall were built in this location.





## Wray House & Myers & sons Hardware and Tinware



The building in this picture was located on Front Street and was known as Myers and Sons Tin Shop and Hardware Store. It was located at 235 Front Street, just south of where the City Offices are now. It stood next to the Stewart House. I have been able to find very little information about the owners or the store, but it was on the 1900 map of North Liberty, and not the 1917 map. On the map recorded at the Courthouse in 1857 when the city was first platted, the lot where this store later stood was owned by Christian Myers.

Henry Wray moved into North Liberty in 1908 and built the house which stands in this spot in 1912.

Henry's family came to the area in 1840. His Great-grandfather David Wray was married to Maria Alt, the sister of Joseph Alt Sr. David's son Richard was Henry's father.



Henry was married to Myrtle Ramsey in 1900 and was married for 64 years. He was a carpenter for 38 years and built many houses around North Liberty, Coralville and Iowa City. He was also a town clerk and helped with the incorporation of the town of North Liberty.

He was noted for his gardening. In one picture of North Liberty, the corner next to Rob's Meat Market (formerly Koser's) was entirely planted in flowers (I think they were dahlias). His own yard was so full of beautiful flowers and vegetables, they wrote an article about it in the newspaper titled "**Raises 1,000 Gladioluses-Henry Wray Keeps Busy**

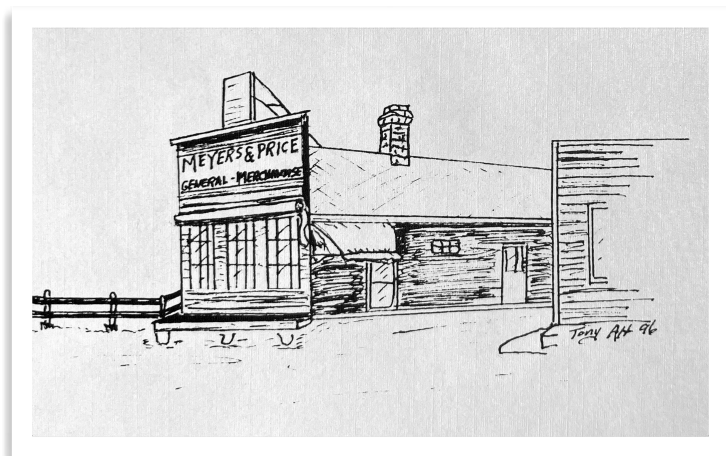
**With Garden.**" He also raised grapes, raspberries, popcorn, sweetcorn, strawberries, beans, muskmelon, and onions.

He had two children, Georgia and Millard. Myrtle died in 1964, and Henry in 1965. Millard died in 1968 in the bathtub of his father's house.





## Meyers and Price



This is a picture of the Meyers & Price General Merchandise Store in the early 1900's. The front of the building was on Front Street and it was situated in the middle of where Cherry Street extends today.

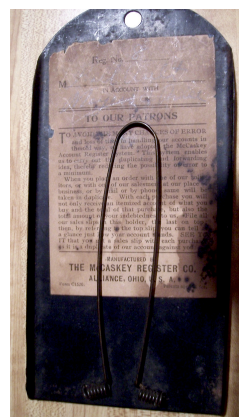
When the road was paved between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, what we call Dubuque Street today was established. The Meyers & Price Store was moved back to it's present location and became Koser's Grocery. Today it is Rob's Meat Market.

The back of the store was an ice house. Ice was cut in cakes every winter from the frozen river and stored in the ice house for use in summer. This included ice box cooling, making ice cream, and for cooling beverages.

Since most families raised chickens for meat and eggs, the farm wives would bring the surplus to market to trade for other groceries. All eggs were candled. That means they were held up to a strong light to see if they were pure. The price was as low as ten cents per dozen. Live chickens were sometimes brought in. Most all farmers kept cows for milk and butter. The butter was separated from sour cream. The butter fat was salted and made into rolls. The surplus was marketed at the store.

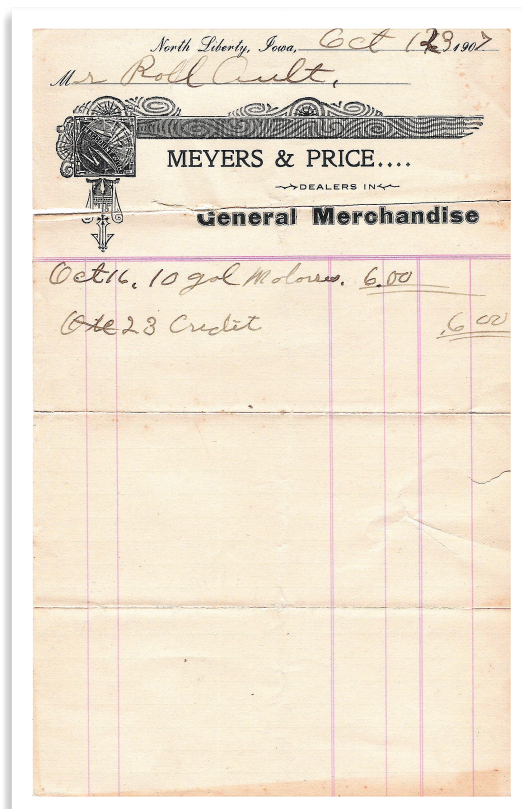
Different owners of the store were Struble, Marek, Evans, Kosers, and it is presently occupied by Rob's Meat Market.

The picture at left is a gadget kept on hand by Meyers and Price Wholesale Grocery to help their customers keep track of their bills. It was a black metal plate with a spring clip on it somewhat like a mousetrap. Customers were supposed to hang this in their homes and put their bills under the clip so they could tell how much they owed the store. Below you can read exactly what the tiny printed instructions said.



*"To Our Patrons: To avoid the many chances of error and loss of time in handling our accounts in the old way, we have adopted the McCaskey Account Register System. This system enables us to carry out the duplicating and forwarding idea, thereby reducing the possibility of error to a minimum. When you place an order with one of our solicitors, or with one of our salesmen, at our place of business, or by mail or by phone, same will be taken in duplicate. With each purchase you will not only receive an itemized account of what you buy and the total of that purchase, but also the total amount of your indebtedness to us. File all our sales slips in this holder, the last on top; then by referring to the top slip, you can tell at a glance just how your account stands. SEE TO IT that you get a sales slip with each purchase as it is a duplicate of our account against you."*

Here you see a bill of Rollie Alt in 1907 for 10 gallons of molasses for which he was charged \$6.00.



# School District #1, Penn Township

## Memories written by Joe Alt



Location: Cherry Street across from North Liberty City buildings

Built in 1899, destroyed by fire in 1974

The school had three rooms for classes. High school classes were held in the upstairs until the Interurban started to run in 1904. After that, high school students went to Iowa City, many to University High School.

The upstairs had a raised stage in the east end. A curtain could be raised or lowered. The stage was used for school or community programs. The entire building was heated with a jacketed furnace in each room. The furnace was fueled by wood or coal which had to be carried in from the shed out back.

The drinking water was carried by the bucket from the White's house on the east. Each room had a large crock container with a faucet on the bottom. Each pupil had their own drinking cup, usually an aluminum folding cup.

The girls outside toilet was to the right of the schoolhouse. The boys was to the left. When a pupil wanted to go out, they would have to get permission from the teacher by



raising their hand. One finger meant to get a drink in the hallway, two fingers meant to go to the toilet outside. Strange, in cold or bad weather, there weren't many two fingers raised, only in extreme necessity. In later years, a well was drilled and toilets were added on to the front of the building.

Each room had desks which were assigned to each pupil to sit in when not in class recitation. The desks were flat on top with places for books underneath, and an inkwell in the upper corner. The inkwells were supposed to be kept covered when not in use.

There was a large school bell in the bell tower with a rope extending down to the lower floor. The sound of the bell in the morning would be a signal for the kids to come to school. It also rang for recesses and noons, and for school dismissal.

The school grounds were very attractive with a wide sidewalk along the front. There was a hitching cable for the public to tie their horses. Sometimes the horses would get frightened from the children playing on the sidewalk. The beautiful elm trees that stood along the yard were destroyed by the epidemic of Dutch Elm Disease some years ago.

I went to school there during the 'teens. I was taught reading beginning with the ABC's, writing (by the Palmer Method of Penmanship where instead of finger motion, the whole arm was used) , spelling, language, grammar, geography, history, physiology, and hygiene. Pupils were required to take the eighth grade examinations at the Court House in Iowa City. Music was singing group songs. Sometimes when I was supposed to have been studying I gazed out the window, towards the blacksmith shop. When the blacksmith doors were open, sparks were flying sometimes. I can still hear, when I concentrate, the ringing sound of the big hammer hitting the blacksmith anvil. "The smith, I mighty man was he."

At noon and recess games of baseball, Drop the Handkerchief, Blind Man's Bluff, Prisoner's Base, Three Deep, and Pom Pom Pull Away were played. Sometimes we would just chase each other around the outside of the school house. I remember a certain girl would chase me, but being the shy boy that I was, she never quite caught me.

After I was married, our five children also went to this school. In the 1940's I was director of the school. The director's job was to hire the three teachers and a janitor, to purchase the fuel and supplies, and keep the building in repair.



Some of the teachers were Winifred Stewart (who taught for 50 years), Lola Sponey, Estelle McCune, Laura Anderson, Charles Hacke, Eloise Martin (Mrs. Carl Snavelly), Esther Klenk (Mrs. Joe Hemphill) and Irene Lacina.

Other teachers who taught here or elsewhere in the area were Mrs. Mary Mehaffey, Mrs. Ira Chamberlin, Mrs. C.E. Maxey, Mrs. John Crozier. In the mid to late 1940's, a Press Citizen article titled "Present-Day Teachers in Penn Township Schools" listed the following as teachers: Esther Klenk, Mrs. Edna Miller, Mrs. Myrtle Main, Mrs. Gladys Topinka, Mae Misel, Catherine Donahue and Mrs. Beatrice Walter.

The following memories of this school are my own. (Joan Alt Belknap)

When I was in school in the 1950's, my teachers were Mrs. Krall, Mrs. Rowe, Mrs. Mabel Jones, and another teacher was Mrs. Graeff. The only male teacher I remember during all my elementary years was Mr. Railsback. He was my brother's teacher.

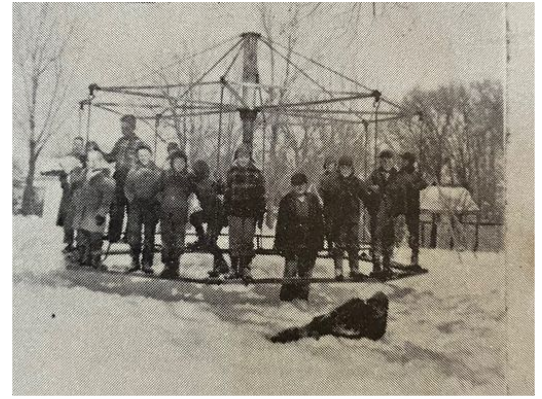
When you are in school, you remember the funniest things. When I started kindergarten, I was really impressed because the milk came in these little square cartons which we saved and painted. (I came from a dairy farm where milk came straight from the cow). We then used them as building blocks. I loved them, and getting the milk in cartons. I'm afraid that I didn't like THE MILK, I just liked THE CARTONS. Another thing I really liked was the rocks on the playground. Around our house, all we saw was gravel or dull rough rocks. The schoolground had these great little shiny pebbles. I was sure that some of them were valuable, possibly even jewels. I spent many recesses sorting through them, looking for the prettiest ones.

I also remember that "phonics" was a new thing at the time and we didn't have regular workbooks. We had tablets that we tore a sheet from for every lesson. I learned to read sooner than most of my class, so Mrs. Krall sent me down the street to my aunt's house to read stories to her while my class learned to read. I still remember *Make Way For Ducklings* was one of the books I read to her, and *Blueberries for Sal*. Our school didn't have a library, but the district would send a couple dozen books to each classroom for students to read. Luckily, my great-aunt Winifred was a teacher, and through her and others, our house always had a lot of reading material. I especially liked fairy tales.

We didn't have hot lunch at school either. Everyone either walked home for lunch if they lived close, or brought a sack lunch. I discovered store bought white bread in someone else's lunch, and for a long time, I thought it was punishment to have to eat

home made bread. Of course, now it seems like a treat to have home made bread warm from the oven.

There were the usual swings on the playground, and teeter totters. The best two things though, were the large merry-go-round and the smaller merry-go-round. The big one could hold about 50 kids I think. It had benches in an octagonal shape and took a lot of work to get going around fast. The best part was when it was going very fast, you could grab the uprights with both hands and let your feet fly straight out with the force of the air. The smaller one (it was newer) was similar to those on playgrounds still. It could easily go very fast and you could sit on the upper part of each "stall" and hook your feet on the lower part, then lean back over the open air. I was one of the few girls who was willing to hang by my knees on the trapeze while it was swinging full speed. This was a questionable virtue, since I often had to wear dresses to school.



When the weather was ok, we had to ride our bikes or walk a mile to school. Once, I remember hearing tell about how the road was so muddy that my sister got stuck in the mud and the neighbor, Antone Wagner, had to go out to the road and pull her out. It wasn't until 5th grade that we rode a school bus. I thought the bus was a lot of fun when we finally got one.

I remember that I was in fourth grade when I learned that I was going to be an aunt for the first time. I was in second grade when I had to start wearing glasses. I was in kindergarten when Frankie Lauderdale kissed me 25 times.

So...you have read my father's memories, and some of mine. What memories do you have? What will you still remember when you are 47?

Students from the area went to high school in Iowa City. They often stayed in town during the week during the school year like my Grandpa Rollie. After the Interurban started running in 1904, many students rode the interurban to school each day like my dad Joe.

My Grandpa Rollie went to the Iowa City Academy. He speaks about it in his diary. We have receipts showing that in 1884, he paid \$10 tuition fee for the winter term. My father wrote

*"Ten dollars in this day doesn't sound like much, but in those days it took 100 dozen eggs at ten cents per dozen to make \$10, or 166 pounds of live chickens at 6 cents a pound, or 2 cords of wood delivered to Iowa City."*

Grandpa's report card shows that he took Word Analysis, Arithmetic, Grammar, and Writing.

My father, Joe, went to University High School. He usually rode in on the Interurban. Some other students in school then were Mort Koser and Joe Hemphill. My dad was a cross country track runner. He also played the coronet. Once he let it slip that he had even taken dance lessons. He knew an education was important, but he also knew that what he really wanted was to be a farmer. It didn't make him rich, but it made him happy.

## **Other Schools**

### **First School –**

According to Charles Ray Aurner (*Leading Events in Johnson County, Iowa History*) the first school held in Penn Township was in the cabin of David Crozier in 1842, and was taught by Benjamin Horner. There were 16 children. It burned down.

### **Following schools --**

In 1843 a school of hewn logs was built where North Liberty is now located. It served as school, public meeting place, and house of worship. Miss Frost taught there that year and her pay was equal to \$8 a month. She lived with various parents of her pupils. The building was remodeled in 1849.

In 1860 a real frame building replaced the log school.

In 1865 a school with two stories was built in the same spot in North Liberty and the grades were partially separated for the first time. Miss Elizabeth (Nicholas Zeller says her name was Martha) Bowman was one of the early teachers in this school. This school had rooms upstairs where the teacher could stay. In 1899, the "new" school was built and used until the present Penn Elementary was finished.

## **Crossroads School --**

The date for the original building of Crossroads school is unknown to me, but an article in the *Press Citizen* titled "*4 Generations at Same School*" stated that the "new" school was built in 1893. The school was located four miles northwest of North Liberty (in Madison Township) and a mile east of Swan Lake, but has since been removed.

The four generations who were pictured were George Berchenbriter, his daughter Mrs. Frank Zeller, her niece Ellen Novy and Ellen's father, Emil Novy. All four attended Crossroads school and Mrs. Zeller and her mother both taught at the school. The school was also used for spelling bees, literary society meetings and exhibitions.

Ellen, now Mrs. Edgar Colony, tells me that in the late 50's they brought several small schools together in the Crossroads building and enlarged it and dug a basement. By the later 1970's it was used by the State Conservation Commission and has since been removed altogether. She said when she went there to school, there were three buildings in the same vicinity. The school, the Crossroads Church, and a "township hall." She and her sister Jean remember special events being held at the church when they were younger. All three are now gone. The Novy family lived in the farm house in Madison Township where art teacher Beth Saxton now lives. This is not unexpected, since Beth is Ellen's daughter!

## **Hemphill/Danner School --**

In 1868, J. K. Hemphill gave land for a school in Penn District 4, so that students wouldn't have to travel to Coralville. Later it was moved and known as the Danner School.

## **Union School --**

This school is straight south of North Liberty. It is at the junction where you either turn right to Forever Green or left to go to Coralville. It is now a house and painted dark red. An article in the *Press Citizen* titled "Oldest Living Pupil is 92 Years Old" contains many details of the school and it's history. Though it was not the first school built in the area, it is the oldest one still standing. When it was built around 1858, it was about a mile and a half southwest of the present position. It was moved in 1866.

Some early teachers were Mr. Hochtellen, Zack Lanning, Eliza Wilson and Henry Snively. At the time the article was written, the oldest pupil living was Mary Margaret (Grove) Green who was then 92. Another pupil still living was David Saylor VonStein. Some other names of early students were Abbott, Albright, Bowman, Colony, Grove, Green, Hoover, Cramer, Long, Madden, Miller, Myers, Scales, Williams,

Wilson, and Zeller.

The water they drank came in a bucket from a nearby slough and everyone drank from the same tin cup or wooden dipper. They sat on benches and near the wall in one place, you could fit a pencil through the crack in the wall.

### **"Penn #" schools --**

When I was a girl in the late 1950's and going to school at the two-story school in North Liberty, the classes became large enough that more room was needed. The district reorganized all the small schools and the lower grades all consolidated at North Liberty while the upper grades were bussed, each to a one-room rural school. The main school in North Liberty was Penn #1, and the others were Penn #2 etc. I only recall two of them. One was just south of the junction of Dubuque Street and North Liberty Road. It is still there but has become someone's home. The other was a hair north of Holiday Road and 12th Avenue Extension near Coralville. That school is no longer there and the road and bridge have been moved so that they are now south of the school site instead of north.

I clearly remember my year at that school. It was near the railroad tracks and the deep ditches were filled with sumac bushes. We often played softball during recess and once when Larry Wood chased a ball which had gone into the ditch, he learned that he was violently allergic to sumac. A more miserable fellow I can't recall as he was covered from head to foot with a terrible rash. I think our teacher there was Mrs. Ferne Hirt. I remember the toilets. They were in the entry/cloak room, but they weren't flush toilets. They were wooden seats beneath which our waste dropped into a deep pit and laid there for all eternity. In order to keep them from stinking, they put some chemical into them periodically and I remember that it smelled somewhat like wet peanut shells all the time. I think that was fifth grade, and it was the first time that I went to school with a lot of kids I didn't know. Before that, I had known most of my classmates for all of my life.

It was good preparation for junior high. In junior high, all the Penn Township students were sent to University High School where the tuition for the district was much cheaper than City High School. (There was no West yet). At U-High, I felt like a small fish in a big sea and had a lot of trouble finding a comfortable niche. U-High closed in the late 60's or early 70's.

With more reorganization, the schools became much like they are now, with the elementary students at Penn Elementary, junior high at Northwest, and high school at West High School.

# Churches

The Methodist movement kept pace with the early frontier. In 1841 in a cabin on section 8-80-6, (some say it was section 7, some say it was at Wilson's Grove) a Methodist "class" was organized. George and Mary Wein, Jacob, William, Mary and Jane Alt, and Maria Wray were the first members.

A.C. Denison was the superintendent of the first Sunday School class.

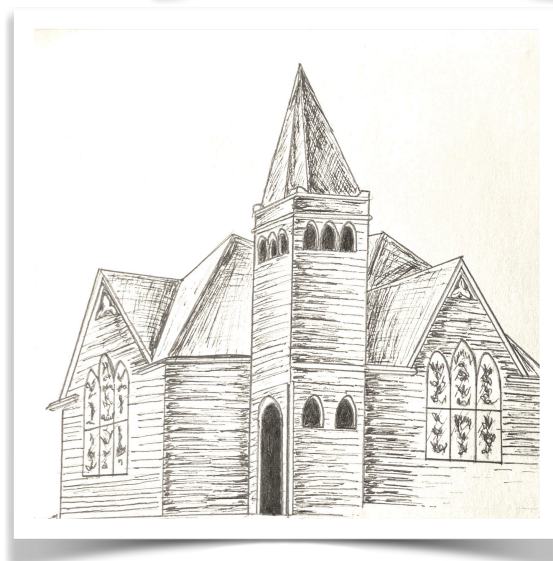
The meetings were held in school houses and homes until September 11, 1854 when the trustees of the church bought a parcel of land from John and Sarah Wilson for \$10, on which to build a church. The present church is located in this same place. (However I found out that will soon change as a new church will be built in another location) Materials were hauled over land from Muscatine. The cost of material was about \$700 and the building was completed in 1855.



After about 40 years, the building was moved to make way for a second building which you see in the picture. According to an old diary written at that time, the church building was dedicated July 17, 1898, and cost \$2,200.

In 1915 the church was raised and a basement was put in, making room for more Sunday School space, a furnace, and a kitchen.

In 1924, the church purchased the house of John Crozier for the minister to live in. It was moved in 1954 to make way for a new parsonage to be built. The new parsonage was dedicated August 29, 1954.



On April 2, 1956, the day after Easter, this building was damaged by a fire caused by lightning.



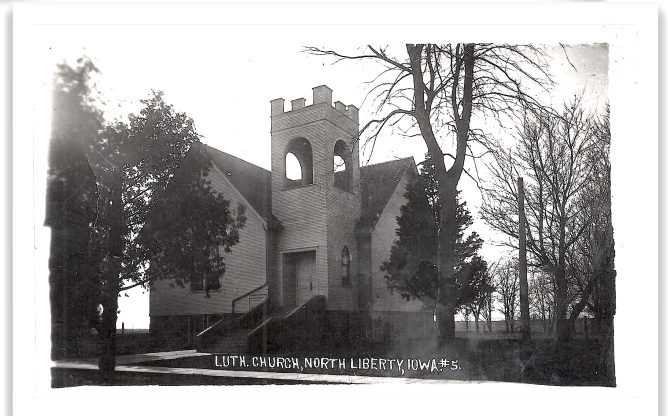
In 1959 an educational and temporary worship facility was completed. Work on the new sanctuary was started in 1971. The first worship and consecration service was held on April 9, 1972.

In 1976, a memorial for Milo Novak was erected which holds the bell from the old church belfry. It has a low pitched tone and was rung to call people to church and was also tolled before funerals. It could be heard miles away.

## Lutheran Church

This Lutheran Church was built in 1868. It was erected on Zeller Street at the Southern end of Main Street. Formally called the North Liberty Evangelical Lutheran Church, some of the early members were Jacob and Francis Bowman, Peter Von Stein, Michael and John D. Zeller, and Peter Long, all early settlers of the area. The Rev. H.T. Early was the first pastor. The cost of the building was \$3,000.

Other churches in the area were the Crossroads Church, the Zion Church of the Evangelical Association, and the Church of God (also called North Bend Church and Bethel Church).



The Crossroads Church was four miles Northwest and one mile East of Swan Lake. It was built in 1872. The interior was divided and men sat on one side and women on the other. Some last names of early members are Musgrave, Gould, Brabein, Sherman, Wray, Rinehart, Birchenbriter, Roberts, Wolfe, Potter, Files, Lentz and Roup.

After it was no longer used as a church, the building was used for community events such as plays and social gatherings.

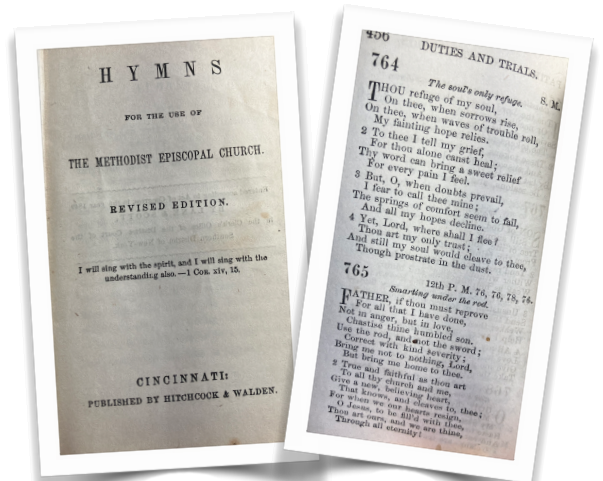
**The Zion Church of the Evangelical Association** was reported to be in section 16 in at least one undocumented xeroxed source I used. I believe, however, that the church was really located in section 19. Many of the early members lived in the area where a church was marked on the 1870 atlas map of Penn Township. It was organized in 1850. Original members were David Green Sr., Mary Green, John Green, Elizabeth Green, David Green Jr., M. and Anna Albright, Elizabeth Myers, and George and Anna Cramer. A frame church was erected in the year 1861 at a cost of \$1,200. It was dedicated in February of 1861 by Samuel Dickover.

The **Church of God** was formed in 1847 and the church was built in 1856. The early founders were John and Catherine Kepford, Jonathan and Catherine Hawk, and Henry and Susannah Bechtel. Like the Methodists, the members met in houses and other buildings until then. After the Civil War, a newer church was built for \$4,000. It was dedicated in 1868. In 1907, the present building was built. This building is still at 1180 West Penn Street. It is currently for sale. The last time I remember being in this church was for the funeral of my aunt, Hazel Alt Bowman. She was a faithful and active member of the church for over 50 years.



The members of the congregation now attend services elsewhere.

These pages are from a tiny hymnal from 1851. It is only 3 inches tall but it has 714 pages and over 1,000 hymns, words only, no music. All the members were supposed to know the tunes or learn them. Most of the songs I've never heard of, but some like Christmas songs are familiar.



## Read About the Author

August 21, 1996

My name is Joan Alt Belknap and I was born in 1949. Except for one year, I have lived all of my life within 10 miles of the home which has been in our family for over 130 years. I am the librarian at Regina High School in Iowa City. I am also the Clerk for the Penn Township Trustees.

I am married to Randy and have a wonderful daughter with long, curly, auburn hair. Her name is Emily Elizabeth (she was born the same year that Clifford the Small Red Puppy was written but she was really named for my Grandmother Emma and my Great-Grandmother Eliza) and she is an aerospace engineer who is engaged to be married to another aerospace engineer named Stefano Frascaroli. We have two loveable dogs named Sunny and Stormy. They are Shetland Sheepdogs and are often mistaken for little Collie dogs. I love flowers, rocks, music, reading (of course) babies, angels, cemeteries, cooking, stamps, computers and animals. I don't like spiders much, and I'm really sick of the gophers and moles who dig up our yard. I get disgusted with people who don't care about the environment and who are mean to animals and children.

Although I have always been interested in family history, it seems like I never had much spare time to spend on it. It wasn't until my Dad passed away last year (1995) that I realized that there were a lot of questions I wanted answered about my family and about the place where I have lived all my life. The person who could have answered them best was gone. Fortunately, my Dad spent his retirement years (he was 87 years old) in collecting and organizing local history (some people called him the "Unofficial North Liberty Historian"). Considering that he couldn't type and had bad eyesight much of the time because of cataracts, he left a LOT of good information for me to look at. Of course, it did not answer all my questions, but it did answer a lot. I realized that I could take all those years of careful research and organize it in a "newfangled" way that might be interesting to students in North Liberty, and maybe even in other places. I want very much to leave the history he collected in many places where it can be used, so the local history will not be forgotten.

There is some of the normal "dry stuff" in this history, but there is also a lot of interesting "trivia." I have tried very hard to be accurate, and many times I read several versions of an event or a life. They didn't always agree, and I have tried to let you know when there was disagreement. Something to think about is that when people are in the "news" they tend to exaggerate. Some history can't be verified because the

people who could say "Yes, that is true." are no longer around. It would be a shame to leave out everything that I couldn't prove to be absolutely true. It wouldn't leave much at all that I could tell about. So, please read with a "grain of salt" and if someday you can tell ME the truth, be sure to give me a call! I am sorry I could not include everyone and everything that happened. Maybe some of you will be adding YOUR story to this history. I certainly plan to add to it as often as I can.

I also have to tell you about my mother. She grew up in South Dakota in a family of 15. Her story is quite another one. She did have a lot to do with the North Liberty story however, because she did the typing for Dad, and when he said, "Let's go for a drive, I want to look at an old barn," she was ready to keep him company. She was also very understanding about all the time he spent nosing around the history sources, and the messy piles of papers and stuff that were left laying around.

One apology I would like to make is that I can't tell you exactly where some of the information came from. My Grandmother kept a scrapbook, but wasn't very good about writing down where the clippings came from, or what date.

Anyway, I hope you enjoy browsing around this history, and If you have any questions, please call or write me an email. ([jbelknap2@mac.com](mailto:jbelknap2@mac.com)) I'll answer it if I can, or tell you who else you might talk to for an answer. There are still a few people around who know a lot of history because they LIVED IT!

Sincerely, Joan Agda Alt Belknap (Agda is my mother's Swedish name)



## Read About the Illustrator

Tony's Great Great Grandfather, Joseph Abner Alt Sr. settled in Penn Township in 1839. Joseph's son Rollie had a son also named Joseph, who had a son named George, who had a son named Anthony (Tony) Robert Alt.

Tony grew up in West Liberty, Iowa with his parents George and Donna Alwine Alt, and two brothers, Steve and Larry.

Tony went to Coe College in Cedar Rapids where he got a B.A. in Art & Business. After college he moved to Phoenix, Arizona and worked at the Phoenix Art Press and at Accent Fine Art. Currently, Tony owns and operates ARA Gallery in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Tony opened ARA Gallery in April of 1994. The Gallery displays artwork from over 140 local and national artists including his own. The works include many formats from painting to pottery and jewelry.



The artwork in this stack was created specifically so that it could be used in an electronic form. Most of Tony's work is more colorful, but historical illustration is nothing new for him and his work often extends beyond the images. He has donated proceeds from original artwork to help depot and barn restorations, nature trail constructions, as well as to organizations that help increase art awareness.

Strong compositions and intense colors are common strokes found in Tony's Artwork. With occasional abstract series', his subjects are primarily landscapes with an artistic, historical flare. Whether his subject is an antique tractor or a historical building, Tony's work still reflects his trademark compositions, colors and details.

Tony primarily works with a mixed medium of colored pencil and lighter fluid. The lighter fluid blends the colored pencil and dramatically intensifies the colors, resulting in a contemporary appearance.



# Read About Our Family

This story of my brothers and sister and I was written my Dad, Joe Alt. It is the second part of our family history. The first part tells about our ancestors and Dad's early life, and you can read it too if you choose. My parents names are Joseph Abner (Joe) and Agda Eldeen Alt.



" Agda and I have been blessed with five wonderful children. Elizabeth, the first born was born on my birthday, July 4th, 1938. I had been cultivating corn in the morning. When I came in, Agda told me she thought the time was near for her to go to the hospital. I took her in during the afternoon. Elizabeth was born during the evening. I was so excited I drove around to tell Harlan and Hazel about her birth before I went home. Hazel and Robert, not knowing, brought ice-cream and cake down home on the eve of the 4th. When I went to to tell them the good news, I had a treat of the homemade ice-cream and cake.

Elizabeth married LeRoy Utzig in 1958. They gave us the first grandchild- Teresa. In 1987 she married Robert Swenson and they gave us twin great grandchildren Nathan and Whitney, born in October of 1991. They were born two and one half months premature and had a long fight for survival but an untold number of prayers and through God's love and miracle, prayers were answered and they are now doing fine. Other children of Elizabeth and LeRoy are: John, Jane and Michael. We are very much saddened by the death of LeRoy in June of 1992. Many wonderful memories remain of him.

George, our second child, was born August 28, 1941. When George was in University High School he was on the football and track teams. That is when Agda learned football. George served in the United States Navy. He married Donna Alwine in 1962. They gave us three grandchildren-Steven, Larry and Tony. Steven married Sandra Rock in 1989. They gave us our first great grandchild, Angela Agda. George is an employee of Proctor and Gamble, working with the computer system.

Arthur was born on January 12, 1944. He also played on the U-High football team and was on the track team. He served in the United States Army Reserves. He married Linda Pacha. They gave us grand-daughter Melissa. Arthur is an employee of the University of Iowa in the environmental service department.

Robert, the third boy was born on October 9, 1947. He also was on the football and track teams at U-High. He served in the United States National Guard. He married Jane Rohret in 1971. They gave us twin boys Jason and Brian, also twin girls Addie and Rae Ann. Robert has followed the food service, starting while in high school at the Randall's store in Coralville as carry out boy. He is now meat department manager at Eagles in Clinton.

Joan, our fifth and last child, was born on July 21, 1949. she graduated from U-High and the University of Iowa. She married Mike Beers and they had one child, Emily. Joan and Mike were divorced. She married Randy Belknap in 1984. She is a librarian at Regina High School.

I am proud the family have followed their parents, being dedicated to their work. We have been truly blessed with a great and wonderful family of children and grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Agda and I are having a very happy life together, thanks be to God. Agda's life touches many people. All who know her love her. I am truly thankful for her love, and caring. Having been born and lived in this area, I have been very much interested in the people and the government of the township. I have served 50 years in Township government, in different capacities, as Penn Township clerk, assessor, trustee. I also served as school board director and also served on a number of Methodist Church offices and committees.

I have recorded much history of events of Penn and Madison townships along with the descendants of pioneer families. I feel I am living a good and enjoyable life, Thanks be to God."

Dad passed away in March of 1995. This project has been done as a work of love to spread and carry on the work that he did.

## Read My Dad's Story (Joe Alt)

My life story begins July 4th, 1907, the day I was born. As the legend goes: On this day, some of the boys from the area joined my brothers Milo, Cecil and Harlan at the Iowa River, just back of the old home place, about 100 rods, for a day of swimming. The result was some painful sunburnt backs. My brothers never forgot this day.

I was born on the Joseph Alt homestead located in Section 8 Penn Township, Johnson County, Iowa. My grandpa came in 1839 and laid out his claim. when the U.S. Government put the land on the market he bought it for one dollar and a quarter per acre. He built his log cabin on top of a hill overlooking the south country side. The countryside could be viewed for miles around. His brothers Henry picked a site to the south on more level ground.

Joseph's ground was timber covered hills, with the Iowa river along the back portion. He had plenty of logs to build his log cabin, and to split rails for rail fences, besides firewood for the large fireplace. Timber became valuable in time for saw logs to make lumber and cord wood for the wood market in Iowa City.

Grandpa Joseph was born at Harper's Ferry, VA. in 1817. His great grandfather, Valentine Alt, sailed from Amsterdam, Holland on the ship Davy, arriving in America on October 25th, 1738. He settled in York County Pennsylvania. His son Jacob was a soldier in the Revolutionary War from 1775- 1778. Jacob died in 1814.

Jacob's son, Jacob jr. (1782-1833), was Joseph Alt's father. He lived in Harper's Ferry Virginia. He married Mary Drew in 1809. she and twin brother Abner were the children of Michael Drew. he was in Washington's army at Valley Forge. The name Abner is carried down through my grandfather's name (Joseph Abner) to my name, Joseph Abner. When Joseph was 3 months old, his father moved the family to Clarke County, Ohio. Joseph made the trip on horseback with his mother. His father died in 1833. Two years later in 1835, the mother, Mary Drew, married George Wein. In another two years the family moved to western Illinois.

In 1839 Joseph and his brothers came and laid out their claims, in what later became Penn Township in 1846. The families moved here in 1840. there have been Alts living in Penn Township ever since. In another eight years, 1848, Joseph married Eliza Kepford, whose parents came from Pennsylvania. Eliza was a sincere Christian. On every



picture of her, a little white bow pin can be seen, signifying she was a member of the W.C.T.U. an organization against the use of alcohol for human consumption. I have always been thankful for her strong stand on the use alcohol. I feel like she has touched my life, thru my father. it is like she started a tradition for her descendants to follow. Times have changed. The younger people of today have not been educated on the effects of alcohol on their lives, to them it is the thing to do. The fact remains, the effects of alcohol on the human body has not changed. it still causes death, suffering to the innocent as well as the victim, and the destruction of property. Grandma Eliza was devoted to her husband and her family, and a friend to all. She took to her bed immediately following her husband's death, and died a few days later. They both died in 1904, three years before I was born.

I am going to write about their children, because they were a part of my life. It was a special occasion when my aunts came to visit us, as well as Uncle George.

Aunt Alice was the first born in 1848. She attended the University of Iowa, where she met and married Major John Pickler in 1870. Major Pickler was a soldier for the Union army in the Civil War. After the war he graduated from the University of Iowa and went to the University of Michigan where he completed the law degree. He and the family settled in Muscatine, Iowa. He was elected to the Iowa legislature. Later he went to South Dakota, and when South Dakota became a state in 1889, he represented the new state as congressman-at-large in the 51st Congress, and was returned subsequently by election to the House of Representatives for the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th Congresses of the United States in Washington, D.C. While in Congress he introduced the resolution that established the first Rural Free Delivery of mail. Aunt Alice was a gracious lady. she had a very positive attitude. She worked for the church, for the S.C.T.U. and for women's suffrage. The Picklers lived at Faulkton, South Dakota. They had four children. Mr. Pickler died in 1910. Aunt Alice died in 1932. Burial was in Faulkton Cemetery.

John Wesley, second child of Joseph and Eliza, born 1850, died at 7 years of age.

Albert Jacob the third child, was born in 1852. He moved to California at an early age. Never married, he died in California in 1929.

Aunt Kate was born in 1853. She joined her sister Alice and husband, at Faulkton, S.D. in 1883. There she married William G. Faulkner in 1885. He was born in Ireland in 1851. He came to Faulk County with the first settlers in 1883, and settled on Government land at Burkmere, S.D. He during his lifetime, developed one of the largest ranches in the county. In 1889, he was elected County Commissioner, holding

office continuously until elected County Auditor in 1894. Mr. Faulkner died in 1916. After his death, Aunt Kate made her home in Los Angeles with her sons Drew and James. In 1927 she went to live with Aunt Nell Latham. After Nell died in 1945, Kate went back to Faulkton to live with her daughter Maude Niemeyer. She died in 1949, age 96. She and her husband had 7 children. Some of their descendants still live in Faulkton, S.D.

George Joseph was the 5th child, born in 1855. He married Dora Colony in 1882. Her parents were a prominent Clear Creek Township family. Uncle George and Aunt Dora owned a large farm NE of Tiffin, Iowa. They had 2 living children. The first born died on the way over to Grandma and Grandpa's house. Grace, the second child, married Attorney J.G. Shifflet of GRinell, Iowa. The other child was Dr. Roy C. Alt, who practiced medicine in Cedar Rapids. he died fairly young. Grace lived to be 98 years old. Aunt Dora died in 1935, the same year Roy died. Uncle George died in 1947 at 92 years of age.

Aunt Nell was born in 1859. she taught school in Penn and Madison Townships, for a number of years. She joined her two sisters in South Dakota and met David H. Latham. They came back to the old home to be married in 1894. They made their home at Faulkton. Latham was born in Michigan. The family farm bordered the the Henry Ford family farm. D. H. Latham went to Faulk County, S.D. in 1885. He was elected State Attorney for South Dakota in 1894, and re-elected in 1896, 1902, and 1904. In later years Uncle Latham and Aunt Nell moved to Los Angeles to make their home. Latham was a large stockholder in the Security Trust and Savings Bank in Los Angeles. He died in 1927, a wealthy man. Aunt Nell continued to live in Los Angeles until her death in 1945. She never forgot where she was born. She along with Alice and Kate would make frequent visits back to the old home. She left a sum of money to her brothers and sisters.

My father Rollie was the last born of the family. He was born in 1864. He being the last child, stayed at home and helped his father and mother, much the same as I did. He attended the Iowa City Academy. In comparison, Grandpa Alt was 31 when he married, Dad was 25, and I was 29. Grandpa was 47 when his last child was born, Dad was 46, and I was 42. Grandma was 23 when she was married, Mother was 21, and Agda was 23. For the last child, Grandma was 39, Mother was 42, and Agda was 36. In 1881, Dad kept a diary. He was 17 years old then. In the old home there was a built-in bookcase on the north wall, just inside the kitchen entrance. On the top shelf, along with a bunch of other stuff, these diaries were kept, starting in 1881 to the 1900's. This shelf was undisturbed for years. When we moved, Dad put all the diaries in a box.



They were unnoticed until I retired, and ran across them. It was like finding gold. They contain so much history of times, places and family.

- 1881
  - oats sold for 32¢ per bushel, hogs for \$6 cwt.
  - September 19 President Garfield died
  - April 12 shoveled snow from Stewart's to Liberty corner drifts were 4 feet deep and it was 16 degrees below freezing
  - April 19 the river is as high as I have ever seen it (this was the flood that future floods were measured by)
- 1882
  - May 22, there was snow on the ground
  - Nov 27-butchered 10 hogs
  - Nov 9, George and Dora were married
- 1883
  - Jan 29 took a load of wood to IC on the river
  - Mar 27 Grandpa Kepford died. Uncle John went for coffin -Uncle Joe went to see about digging the grave
  - Next day he took the rough box to the upper cemetery. -Services were at 12:00 at the house and 1:00 at the church
  - Contracted a man to cut 100 cords of wood for 80¢ a cord
- 1884
  - Feb 10 walked to Iowa City, took 2 hours, 6 below zero
- 1885
  - Feb 5 Ab started for the west tonight (ended up in Calpella, CA and never married or returned home again.)
  - May 7 ground was frozen hard
- 1886
  - Jan 29 got up at 3:00 a.m. went over to George's to pick up a load ohogs to take to C.R. The sled upset on the way over. Got to the Rapids at 12 noon. Then we brought a load of shingles back for Ike Meyers. Upset once, got stuck 5 or 6 times, didn't get home until 9 p.m. (long day huh?)
  - June 4 Pa and I went up to Ike Meyers barn raising.

Dad loved horses. This one time he wrote "Kit is sick bad. Dr. Butler came out and gave her medicine, but it didn't do her any good. I sat up with her until 2 in the morning. She died. I had to cry a little. she was a good horse." Kit must have been a popular name for a horse. We had a Kit when I was home.

On December 4, 1889, Mom and Dad drove to Uncle Lew and Aunt Mary Alt's at Cedar Rapids. Uncle Lew and Dad went to Marion, to get a marriage license. At 2 p.m. they were married. They intended to come home but it stormed so they stayed all night at Uncle Lew's, and came home the next day. Dad wrote in his diary that his Dad and Mother were glad to see Emma and welcomed her. Mother in her diary on Dec 18, 1888, wrote that she and Ella Meyers accepted Christ as their Savior. On Dec. 20, she wrote "I feel the Lord has blessed my soul and I am glad I made the start." On Jan 20 she wrote "Went to the M.E. Church this evening. I Joined the church. Others taken in were Art, Rollie (my father), Mae Moreland, and Ella Meyers." Mother always kept the faith, and lived a good Christian life. This commitment to Christ helped her over the trials of her life. She lived her Christian experience, loving, kind, slow to anger, forgiving, and lived up to the golden rule. Many times she reminded me of the golden rule.

Dad, I am sure kept his faith in Christ, but like many others, lost interest in going to church. He had a few besetting sins that bothered him. He was honest and as a carry over from his mother's teaching, was bitterly against drinking alcohol and the use of tobacco and gambling. He wouldn't allow a deck of playing cards in the house, because they were used for gambling. We played checkers, dominoes, old maid (nobody wanted to be the old maid), flinch and rook. Rook was a popular game. Friends would gather at parties to play progressive rook. My father was very protective of me. There were certain things I could not do, certain places I couldn't go and certain boys he didn't want me to be with. I didn't appreciate it at the time, but as I look back, I am glad I had a father and mother who cared.

After their marriage, Mom and Dad lived with Grandpa and Grandma Alt. Dad helped Grandpa with the farming. The same situation happened when Agda and I were married. Grandpa built a kitchen on to the west end of the house, which they used. There were double doors dividing the downstairs, leaving a living room and a bedroom for Grandma and Grandpa to use.

Milo was the first of my brothers to be born in 1891. The story was told about Milo. They were stuffing sausage and Milo got some and was dragging it on the floor behind him pretending it was a snake after him. Grandpa got after him and Milo ran and hid under the bed. Mother went to get him out and he asked her if Grandpa was after her too. Milo was 16 years old when I was born. By the time I was old enough to remember, he was away from home. He married Ada Paintin, A Coralville girl. Their children were: James, Paul, Mary and Harold or Bud as he was called. Milo and Ada lived at Cedar Rapids where he was an electrician for the Crandic Railroad line. Later he moved to Minneapolis, where he worked for the Northern

States Power Company. Ada died in 1959. After his retirement he lived in Burbank, CA., near his daughter Mary. He was killed, being struck by a car while crossing the street on Sep. 18, 1967. He was buried in Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

Cecil Jay was the second born Jan 18, 1894. During World War I Cecil enlisted in the United States Army. He served in the commissary Dept, Fort Snelling, MN. After the war, he came home for a while, then he went back to Minnesota. He found permanent work at the Federal Barge Lines, a job he liked. He married Gildred Boreen in Kingman Arizona in 1930. Gildred was a St. Paul, MN girl. She was devoted to Christ. She knew the bible from cover to cover and could speak out with authority about it. I am going to write later how thru the efforts of Cecil and Gildred the events of my life were changed. She died in 1951. She is buried in the Ancestral burying grounds of the family, near Lund, Wisconsin. Cecil was fatally injured while at work at the Federal Barge Line terminal, Minneapolis, in April 1953. He was buried near Lund, Wisconsin.

Harlan McKinley, the third child, was born June 20th, 1895. He enlisted in the Navy during World War I. He was stationed on the U.S.S. Connecticut, as a 1st class electrician. he followed the electrical trade the rest of his life. when the REA built electrical lines in this area, he wired many of the farm buildings. He married Hazel Fern Allen, daughter of Charles Allen, a farmer living SW of Tiffin. The wedding was at the bride's home, Dec 28, 1922. I remember Dad hitching a team of horses to the top surrey, and he took us to the wedding. He had the side curtains on to help keep the cold out. Hazel Fern taught school, out over the Mose Mann bridge somewhere. She died April 30th, 1930 of uremic poison. this was an illness pregnant women got and in those days most always fatal. Harlan was working for Howard Moffitt, when he met Lyla Daniels. They were married August 11, 1933. Lyla had been divorced from Harrison Daniels. She had 3 children, Maxine, June and Gregg. In 1938, John Harlan was born to Harlan and Lyla. Harlan was very good to the Daniels children, they in return loved and respected him as their Dad. Harlan and Lyla bought a house south of North Liberty, known as the old Dutch Church property. They lived here for a number of years. The children grew up here, and John was born while they lived here. during World War II, Harlan and Lyla moved to California, where they bought a house in San Pablo. They both worked at Kaiser Shipyards. Harlan always had trouble making ends meet. Moving to California was the stepping stone to his financial success. Harlan went through some tough times and many hardships. It was his perseverance and hard work along with God's guidance that made him a winner. Lyla died Dec 11, 1970. Harlan died October 21, 1981. Both were brought back and buried in Ridgewood Cemetery in Penn Township near North Liberty.

Hazel Winifred, the girl of the family, was born July 10, 1897. When Milo lived in Cedar Rapids, Hazel got a job, doing housework for a Cedar Rapids attorney Frank Byers and family. When Milo moved to Minnesota, Hazel went along and got a job doing housework for the Peterson family. They owned several drug stores in Minneapolis. It was God's will that Hazel return to Iowa. Upon leaving Minneapolis, Gildred said to Hazel, she would pray that she would meet a good man and get married. During the early thirties Cecil had no work during the winter so he and Gildred came home. Cecil helped with the chores, helped get the years supply of wood and fill the ice house with ice from the river. One evening a week, Cecil, Gildred, Hazel and I would attend Union prayer meeting in Iowa City. The Bowman family attended the meetings also. This was where Robert and Hazel met. On Sept 18, 1835, Robert and Hazel were married at the Little Brown Church in the Vale at Nashua. God has richly blessed Hazel. He has supplied her with the necessary things needed in life. she lives happily where she is. Lloyd and Ethel are very good to her. She deserves it all. She has worked hard all her life.

Max was the youngest of the family. He was born in 1910 and died in 1973. He was born with Down's Syndrome.

After my grandparents died in 1904, Dad took over the old Homestead. He paid his brothers and sisters ten thousand dollars for 239 acres. His brother Albert wrote from California and advised Dad that he never could expect to pay the debt off-and to sell out and get away and buy a more productive farm somewhere else. Dad did put the place up for sale, but he couldn't get his price. He built a new barn and bought 75 more acres, bringing the total to over 300 acres. As I look back, there were too many non-productive acres, timber and brush land. The crop land would not produce like the prairie land to the west. In the early thirties we had the great depression. Farm prices got real low, corn sold for 10¢ per bushel, some farmers burned corn instead of buying coal. I have a bill of sale for 73 hogs Dad sold in Chicago. The price ranged from \$3.00 per hundred to \$5.90. The whole load of 73 hogs only brought \$1016.17. Many farmers lost their farms. Many other people lost their savings due to the bank failures. It was during this time the mortgage holder, the Equitable Life Ins. Co. took over the Alt Homestead.

I was born a shy person, never knowing what to say, or how to say it. I feel God has helped and guided me along life's way. I have always been happy and have made the best of things that were. I thank God for His help. My mother and father were very good to me. Dad was especially good. He took me with him to a lot of places. One time he took me to Chicago with a shipment of cattle. I remember very well riding in the caboose of a freight train, pulled by a steam locomotive. I also remember the Chicago

Stock Yards with its many pens all filled with cattle. The Chicago Stock Yards were the largest in the country. Now they are no more, how time changes things.

In the middle teens, the Douglas Starch Works blew up. We heard the boom at home. Dad took me up to Cedar Rapids on the interurban, to see the damage the explosion caused. I will always remember the damage to the building and the breakage of glass to the houses surrounding the plant. I remember also, Dad would take me along to Cedar Rapids on the interurban, the day before Christmas. I never bought anything, but I would see the pretty Christmas things and do some wishful thinking. My Christmas presents were usually some clothing, knife, gyroscope games of some kind and the rest of the stocking, hung by the big old fire place, filled full with candy and nuts and perhaps an orange. One time I got a little stationary steam engine heated by a little wood alcohol burner. One time I got a lighted match too close to the alcohol container. It went whoof, burnt my fingers and scared me, otherwise I was lucky.

My chores after school were to fill the wood box in the kitchen with split wood for the kitchen stove, and to bring in big chunks of wood for the heating stove. Then there was the copper reservoir attached to the end of the kitchen stove to fill with cistern water. The house had spouting on to run all the rain water into a big cistern.

The folks always had plenty of soft rain water to wash face and hands, wash dishes, and to wash clothes in. When I got older I helped with the other chores, like taking care of the horses...We would throw loose hay out of the hay mow and fill the horse mangers with it, then we would pick the biggest and best ears of corn from the corn crib and put eight or ten ears in each box. we would open the barn door, every horse would go to their certain stall, we would then tie them up. during the winter the horses were in the barn every night. Dad took good care of his horses. They had to be curried and brushed every morning before they were harnessed for work. The barn had to be kept clean and bedded down with straw. I am glad I got in on the work horse age. It was a good experience driving six horses on the gang plow, four horses behind and two in the lead. I did feel sorry for the horses.

### **My Life Story Second Edition 1993**

After graduating from High School, I stayed at home helping my father with the farming. it was a pleasure, I had real enjoyment. The house was on top of a hill. We could look out over the countryside. In the back was timber and pasture land. The Iowa River flowed along the edge. I spent a lot of time fishing and swimming. Dad had a family car. He didn't drive so I drove, Dad, Mom and Max to where they wanted to go. Dad liked to go places. He liked to go to sales at the West Liberty Sale barn. We



would go to Watermelon Day at Conesville, Sauerkraut Day at Lisbon, and other places including Muscatine.

Cecil didn't have winter work, so he and his wife Gildred came down to the farm. Gildred was a devout Christian. One evening a week we would go to Union Prayer meeting. The meetings were made up of members from the different churches in Iowa City, and surrounding area. Hazel worked in Iowa City at that time. We knew members of the prayer meeting group that went to the Nazarene Church in Iowa City. One Sunday night, in the summer of 1935, we went to the Nazarene church. Agda, being a greeter, was sitting in the back of the church. When we arrived a few minutes late, she seated us in the same row that she was sitting in. That's how we met-at this service. On Hazel's day off we invited Agda out to the farm. From then on, Agda and I saw each other often. We found out we had a lot in common, and enjoyed each others company very much. We were married September 18, 1936. We were married at my home near North Liberty. A simple wedding but very meaningful. Cecil and Gildred were our attendants. The flowers were bouquets picked from Mother's garden. Mother had some of the neighbors in to help prepare dinner. Milo, Ada and family from Minneapolis, Robert, Hazel, Lloyd and Ethel, Harlan and Lyla and family, and Agda's brother Emil were in attendance. Uncle George Alt was also there. For our wedding trip we drove to Minnesota. Stayed a short time with Cecil's and Milo's. then we drove to Hitchcock, South Dakota to visit Agda's parents and family. there a big reception was held, with all the family, friends and neighbors in attendance. I enjoyed meeting her family. The wedding and trip were one of the highlights of my life. I thank God, He shared His angel of love with me. God is Love.

Agda showed love by her willingness to leave modern conveniences in Iowa City, to come out to the farm without electricity, to come and live with my parents. We were married during the Great Depression. Many people lost their homes and farms. My father one. He lost the Alt Homestead.

My mother had an interest in her family's Stewart estate. She gave us her interest in return for the welfare of her, Dad and Max. We moved to our new home in March 1942. We borrowed money from the Farm Home Administration. This was an agency the U.S. government formed during the depression, to help people without money to borrow money for their needs and to help establish credit. We also borrowed money from the Federal Land Bank to pay for the land.



There is no one except a special person like Agda that would do as she did. Besides taking care of Dad, Mom and Max, and our family-she took time to do church work, being Primary Sunday School Superintendent, teacher, President of women's organization the W.S.C.S. She was also Secretary of the Missionary Society for a time. She was appointed by the Iowa City District Court to be guardian of Aunt Winifred Stewart, arranging for her care and sale of her property. After Aunt Winifred died, Agda was the administrator of the estate.

I farmed on borrowed money. I built an addition on to the barn at the west end. I installed a modern milking parlor with three Surge stalls, a Surge three unit milker, a Majonier bulk milk tank. After several years the milk prices were low, the business was not paying out, so I decided to quit milking and sold the equipment. This was in 1959.

My father developed skin cancer in 1947 and had treatments for that but eventually cancer invaded his body and he died at home in July 1949, at the age of 85.

My Mother was troubled with some heart problems and high blood pressure. She had a series of small strokes that left some impairment after each one. In December of 1960 she fell and broke her hip. She was hospitalized for a month before her death in January 1961 at age of 92.

We have always been grateful that we were able to keep them in our home until the very last. Max also had remained in our home with us up until after Mother's death. At that time Hazel was appointed his guardian and he was placed in a care facility where he remained until his death in 1973 at age of 62.

In September of 1959 I got a job at the University of Iowa, at Burge hall. At that time it was a girl's dormitory. I worked there about thirteen years, retiring December 31, 1974. I enjoyed the experience very much. Besides getting money every month since I retired from the I.P.E.R.S. fund, I also received a small insurance policy, as well as a major medical health insurance policy with Blue Cross.

Agda, all her life has been self sufficient. She worked as a young girl. At age 12, whenever needed, she would go to the neighbors place during the summer and after school hours during the school year. There she would care for their young daughter who had epileptic seizures. She would do this to leave the mother free to get other things done. The child needed constant supervision. At age 16, in 1929, Agda worked for Fred and Charlotte when Gladys was born in their home. There she cared for both Charlotte and the baby for the summer. When going to High School she worked in Hitchcock. After moving to Iowa City she worked at several different jobs. When I was

working at Burge, she worked for the North Liberty Telephone Co. eventually becoming chief operator and office manager. After the change to South Slope Telephone Company she worked at the North Liberty office. she put in a total of 29 years, starting in 1950, working for the telephone company the first few years as part time, then full time retiring on December 31, 1979. Working for the telephone company was something she enjoyed doing. she had contact with the public and made many friends. When she retired she received a bonus of \$11,000 which she put into a retirement fund. At first she got 16% interest. she puts what she has to withdraw every year into CD's, which add to our savings account. Agda is living her life like God has meant everyone to live, loving and serving others. She has transmitted her love into our children. We are very proud of each one of our children."

## Bibliography

If you need more information about some of the sources which I used, please contact me and I will try to help in any way I can. What would be even better is if you could help ME! I would be most interested in any information you could add to this history, and I will be glad to give you credit for your contribution.

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Note: In the scrapbooks kept by my Grandmother and my Aunt Hazel, there are many clippings from newspapers. Most of them do not have the names of the papers or the dates of the clippings. Tracking down this information will take me a long time to complete. Until then, I can tell you that most of the articles came from the Iowa City Press Citizen. In particular, there was a series called "A Fact A Day About Iowa City" which featured North Liberty and its residents a number of times. I frequently used obituaries to obtain interesting details and these came from the Iowa City Press Citizen, The Cedar Rapids Gazette, The Leader, and various newspapers from towns where the departed person lived. There were other articles, such as the closing of the Crandic, which I am fairly sure came from the Cedar Rapids Gazette. Please do not think that I don't consider it important to give credit to the proper parties. I am working on it, and it IS important

**Other sources which would be interesting to explore for information about the lives of the pioneers:**



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